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The Black Cat

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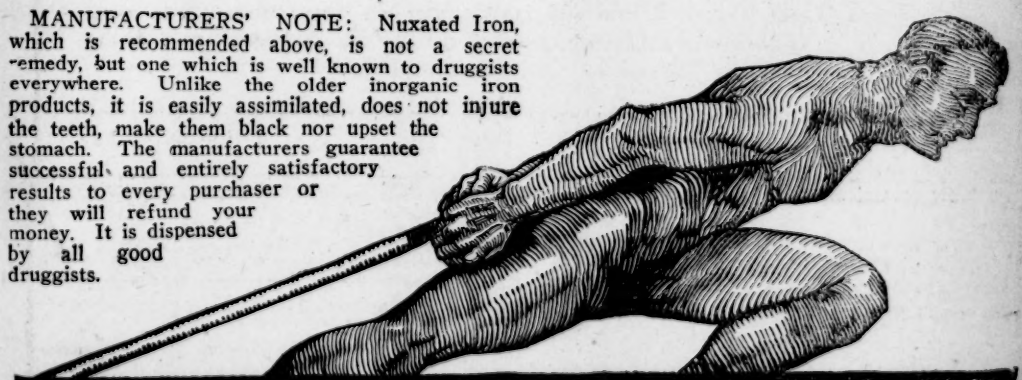

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A TELEGRAPH MESSIAH

By WILL SEBELLE

The story of an unofficial announcement which is not without parallel in history.

E was like a bell with a crack in it, was old Hippolite LeDou, one of those bells that clang in promise of tuneful sound, then end abruptly. Only Hippolite LeDou smote on the chord of life and—

That crack, the break in the bell of his being was a source of conjecture among those of the craft. Knights of the key in the great telegraph fraternity would have it that the gate of ingress to LeDou's queer mind was through the livid, thin-skinned cross on his bald pate where his scalp had once been torn in a car accident, and where the deft fingers of a surgeon had sown it up again.

"Ever since they trepanned his bean he's as cuckoo as a clock," was one remark that expressed the general opinion.

Hippolite minded the remarks not a whit. Eccentric, cunning of eye, he pulled his long, attenuated form through days of telegraph travail, working a long "trolley" here, a short circuit somewhere else, anything from a main-line to a branch, always clouding his cadaverous face with his eternal cigarette smoke, rippling his talon-like fingers over the keys of a silent "mill." For Hippolite was a good Morseman, a major-leaguer in his game.

It was the undependability of the man, his eccentricities and predisposition to acts that, at times, brought him pretty close to the cleavage line of the law that had held him back, had held his wastrel hulk enmeshed in telegraph wires in the shoals of telegraphdom until now, near his half-century mark.

"And what've you got for it?" asked Hamlin Damoody, another operator, one day, sidling over to LeDou in the waiting room. "What, I ask? Nothing, eh? Company never paid you enough to save a little, did they?"

"Nope, never did. What's it your business? What have you got to crow about?"

"Sh-h-h! Money; a bunch of it. A personal pension fund I've been collecting; something I'm salting away against the time when I get the 'thirty' flash."

There was an incisive meaning in the confidential pitch of Damoody's voice, something of profound shrewdness in the sepia of his velvet-brown eyes, something of a superior quality in the very poise of his huge, frock-coated body. There was a charm to Damoody not found in the usual run of operators.

So, during that fifteen-minute relief in the waiting room, while one cigarette followed another into smoky dissolution, with ears serving as resonators to catch the veriest of cadences and emphasis, Hippolite LeDou learned the wherefore of Damoody's opulence. In that same suave, confidential tone that engendered secrecy and admiration, it came.

"Races—'first-pasting' the poor, blamed ignorant bookies—betting on races after the winner's in—by the simple process of holding back a return for two or three minutes," Damoody was recounting. "'Riding' private broker's wires to big rises on selling points—like when I bought Amalgamated Copper and sold it a few hours later at a ten-point advance—oh, a number of ways, 'Hy,' old boy. And to think that you've been piking along on the small stuff—padded bonus slips and things too small and ornery to enumerate. And yet, your stuff is good, like the crack of a Carnegie-medalist. Why not elevate, Hy? Levitate,

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as it were—ascend to the clouds and skim some of the cream off the Milky Way?"

"Me—how?" Hippolite's querulous, tobacco-and-whisky shattered voice asked. "I'm no white-haired boy, y'understand. Maybe you can show me how."

"Sure thing!" Damoody replied, drawing himself up to his six feet of dignity. "That's what I've been so careful and precise in explaining things for. I've been watching you, Hy. You're a man after my own kidney. There's a twenty-five-thousand-dollar bundle of fine, crinkly Federal Reserve currency notes waiting to be lifted, and Malachy Dundas and myself have worked out a neat little job to turn the trick."

"Malachy Dundas? Who's he?"

"Ah, more of your sub-strata denseness, Hy. You are accustomed to playing a lone game without the benefit of expert advice. A professional always has an adviser—an ace-in-the-hole man—to work out the third angle in every triangle. Meet me after you turn in your bonus slip. I'll take you to Malachy's office and have you meet him."

Malachy Dundas! Who was he? Hippolite LeDou pondered the name as he returned to his key. Dundas was not of the telegraph fraternity. As he cleared message after message he quested aback memory lanes. No; Dundas certainly was not a telegraph man. Who was he that he could point a guiding finger to where twenty-five thousand dollars awaited the taking?

"Me, I know where every circuit, wire and lead on the board goes," LeDou muttered. "Nothing about underground conduits, private loops, cableboxes and such things can this Dundas bum show me. Still—"

A soothing recollection that he could be shown came over him, for had not Hamlin Damoody drawn aside visionary curtains and disclosed treasure caches undreamed of? Hamlin Damoody had been summoned a number of times and always managed to shake himself free. Yes, Damoody and Dundas must have ferreted out a new lead—something that would pay a war-time dividend.

"Too many people being killed in this war; too much suffering going on," he thought. "'Bout time for the Son of God to come and save that which has been lost."

For the crack in LeDou's nature was the religious strain that ran through him, a strain absurdly incompatible with his moral ethics. "The Lord will provide" meant just that to him, with the question of how eliminated. He never searched the scriptures for a qualification of the assertion; he cared for none. Provide meant to provide. If booty loomed, it was an ordination, nothing more.

At three o'clock when he filled in his number sheet, loitering near the "Cx" wire, the wire to the World Press, his delicate, wax-like ears caught up the patter of a fast news dispatch coming from New York. He listened to it hurtling through in its staccato ripple: "Worlpress: Fifteen thousand slain in Piave advance—Hudson."

"Oh Lord, when in Thy mercy wilt Thou put an end to all this killing?" LeDou murmured as he slunk out of the operating room. He knew the form that dispatch would take; knew how it would be gloated over for its intrinsic news value—coming as it was, signed by the president of the great news association; knew how, in a brief time, it would be spread to all papers of coast towns to be put out under immense four or five column headlines.

At the appointed time and place he met Hamlin Damoody. They took their leisurely turn to a disreputable old office building near Chinatown.

Like the location of the building, so was the office of Malachy Dundas. From the instant LeDou sighted the name, with the word Attorney under it, on the old frosted-glass-paneled door and passed in, he sensed mystery. It was in the stale atmosphere of the room, in the appearance of old furniture and the litter of papers and piles of ancient, dog-eared and yellow-faded books.

"Attorneying is the least of his worries," Damoody remarked, nudging LeDou with his elbow. "He's got to be something on the door, so he's an attorney."

The door to the adjoining room opened. A man entered. "Ah, Mr. Damoody," he greeted.

As LeDou was introduced he was conscious of the fascination of Malachy Dundas—of his queer proportions. He felt that if Dundas could straighten up he would be able to blow the dust off the hanging light-globe above him; was conscious of his shaggy, unkempt head which tapered at the forehead into a shape that seemed to indicate mental distinctness. At least, mental energy seemed to gravitate from him—from the tone of his harsh voice and the drilling penetration of his gray eyes.

"And so," Dundas said at length, after they had lolled about in the creaky chairs and surcharged the stale air with cigarette smoke, "you see, I have been quite successful in my manipulations. The power of money, judiciously expended!" Dundas was turning the leaves of an old book. "Ah, yes, here it is: Job 7, Third National. I have here the 'guard' word and 'amount' words for Wednesday—exact information culled from a gentleman in the Third National's Foreign Exchange. Their code, you know. The Third National, of course, will have to receive the message Wednesday morning from, ah—say, the Chemists' National of St. Louis, to pay—ah—what name will you use in applying, Mr. Damoody?"

"Harrison D. Gillmore."

"Yes, certainly," Dundas continued. "The Third National will receive a message in code from the Chemists' National to pay 'Gillmore' twenty-five-thousand and to debit their account. Then Mr. Damoody will disguise a little and call and get it and come up here where we will make a careful and equitable division—"

"What's my lay?" Hippolite LeDou cut in.

"Why the message, of course," Dundas answered, smiling. "Didn't you suspect it? From somewhere in the depths the message must come—must actually be received over the private wire of the Third National by their operator. You must cut in on their wire somewhere with a box set. Damody tells me that you know where all the wires go."

"You know, Hy—the underground," prompted Hamlin Damoody. "You're hep to where all wires go house-top and through basements, under sidewalks and through conduits. Can you come across with the dope on where to pinch the loop to the Third National?"

A smile was breaking over Hippolite LeDou's wan face. He felt important. These gentlemen were consulting him; a big deal was in prospect. With that slow deliberation that bespeaks dignity and the process of deep thought, he passed a thin hand over his forehead, over a forelock of sparse gray hair, down over the reddened cross on his pate.

"Because if you do," Malachy Dundas was saying again in his suave tone, "I can take care of the preparations—can have things all ready for us to call at the appointed time to send the message, Mr. LeDou. A trifle more money—judiciously expended—will do it."

The smile on LeDou's thin face flickered out; his skeleton hand came back and, in a deft manner, knocked away a cigarette butt that had become pasted to his lip. "Yes, I know where the Third National's wire goes," he answered. "It's number seventeen on the board. I'm no white-haired boy, y'understand. And I want my dib out of this. Let me see; seventeen leaves the terminal and"—muttering inaudibly he trailed after the wire through the recesses of his brain, came back to audible reasoning again in a kind of a monotoning jargon—"then to Washington Street—Fish Alley—Dupont—Waverly—to Sing Yat's—that's the place! Sing Yat's in Waverly! He has a big cement basement and seventeen passes through it."

All through the following day, while Dundas, from his dusty, queer office, tapped invisible sources that made arrangements on some pretext for access to Sing Yat's basement, Hippolite LeDou was in a superlative state of mind. Never was his sending hand better; never, to him, was the prospect of being lifted from bondage brighter. He even recited numerous choice phrases of scripture at times to tolerant listeners; and during other times his eyes glanced about the operating room—to the switchboard where all wires terminated; to different operators working local ends. And, too,

at times, when not following behind the clatter of the sounder in his own resonator, he would strain his ears to catch fragments of the file going over the "Tn" wire—the private loop to the Third National. And always there would sound above it the lightning-fast hammering of the World Press New York wire through a set of repeaters.

"That's the wire to work," crooned LeDou. "Up there in the World Press office. Only it's always snapping out a tale of battle, death and devastation. How long, O Lord! How long? Oh, that some day a psalm of peace might come from the copper tongue on the receiving end of that wire!"

The promise of a tuneful sound, it was, ending abruptly in the break of his nature; for, no sooner had he given emotion to the sublime thought than his shifting gaze settled on Hamlin Damoody in a far corner of the room, and his thoughts were off again to a vision of twenty-five thousand dollars rubbered together in one compact bundle.

Wednesday was the epochal day for the nefarious trio. Birds of foul plummage, they foregathered early in the mystery office of Malachy Dundas.

"Final instructions, gentlemen," said Dundas. "Let's get it straight, now. At ten o'clock Mr. LeDou and myself saunter to Sing Yat's. That part of it is all arranged. We go to the basement on the pretext of examining a water meter. Mr. LeDou will find the wire he wants, cut in on it, listen for a while, get the necessary signals and numbers, then send this under a St. Louis date-line." He handed LeDou a pen-written slip of paper, then continued. "At eleven o'clock Mr. Damoody here as 'Gillmore'—and I observe that he is shaved and frocked and false-whiskered to perfection—'Gillmore' applies at the Third National, answers the necessary identification questions, garners that wad and leaves. It is all understood?"

"OK, Dundas, I got your file," answered Damoody.

"Me? Oh, yes, certainly, I understand," said Hippolite LeDou, looking up suddenly. "I was just glancing at the carnage headlines of that newspaper on the chair," he added, apologetically.

A few minutes before ten, two drab, wastrel-appearing figures mixed with the multicolors of Waverly Place in Chinatown, took their leisurely turn along its narrow sidewalk, came presently to the big merchandise store of Sing Yat, and entered.

"Great place with its silks and satins and ivory and such like, isn't it?" asked Hippolite LeDou.

"Yes, a little mine, judging from the crowds of tourists that pass here," Malachy Dundas replied. He nodded to a fat Mongolian who indicated with a thickened thumb.

Down a thin stairway they descended, the huge, stooping form of Dundas leading. "Here we are—the basement," he remarked.

"But not here," whined LeDou, looking at the old packing cases, boxes and rubbish about, and sniffing the dank odor. "Not here, Mister Dundas. What we want is mostly always slung in a sling along the retaining wall underneath sidewalks."

"I see," muttered Dundas. "We'll have to move forward."

Together they stepped gingerly and circled obstacles.

"Seems to be shut off," Dundas complained, flaring a match. "Ah, I see! A partition. Here's a door. So! Catch-lock, eh? Yes, here's the undersidewalk part of the basement"—creaking the spring-lock and pushing the old door open. "Quite light in here. Look out! Don't let that door slam and lock us in! Here, I'll set this old box behind it so it can't close. Yes, quite light here—thanks to the thick glass eyes above in the sidewalk."

"Now where's that darned wire?" LeDou interrogated. "Hold this box set and battery valise, Mister Dundas, while I look around. I see some wires on that dust-covered ledge."

Into one corner of the undersidewalk space LeDou climbed—up behind gas, electric and water meters, behind an array of pipes. Once he paused and looked back in the opaque light. "Mister Dundas," he called, softly, "if—if I should make a

mistake and cut into a hot wire with my pinchers and get bumped off—tell 'em to say something from the second chapter of St. John at my send-off—"

"Go on!" Dundas broke in. "Find the wire and shoot the magic words into that big bank! I didn't come down here to listen to any religious stuff."

One insulated "twist" after another was scraped bare and the wires examined; twice LeDou fastened the teethlike clamps of the box set's lead to different exposed wires, but obtained no results.

"You sure the cut-in button is pressed down, Mister Dundas?" he queried, looking down on the tall man holding the set.

"It's just as you left it with me," Dundas snapped.

Indefatigably LeDou worked, cutting, scraping, muttering to himself. Later, and of a sudden, the tiny tongue of the sounder began to clatter.

Quickly LeDou climbed down, rushed over to Dundas, a strange, animated, surprised look in his eyes. That wire! Fast—incredibly fast, it was—the clearest of Morse!

"Put the set down where I can listen to it!" LeDou shouted. "Here!" He looked around, then rushed away a few feet and bounded back with a box. "Put it on this box—"

A snapping click above the muffled staccato cadence of the telegraph set caused both men to turn instantly.

"The door!" exclaimed Dundas. "You took the box away from it! It closed and locked on the other side! Go ahead! Stop that prattling wire and send the message."

Already old Hippolite LeDou was bending one knee to the floor—was working hastily, connecting the battery Dundas had brought in the valise. Finally, his sending fingers poised on the black knob of the key, he waited the end of the message, the "sig" and heard a new number start; then he "grounded" out the operating-room end of the wire, cut in on his batteries, tapped the key, "broke," repeated the number he had heard and speeded on with a firm sending hand.

"Be careful, now!" Malachy Dundas cautioned. "A chance like this only shows up once in a long while. Get it correct, word for word. Don't garble anything that the bank will have to have repeated before they pay 'Gillmore' his money."

He might have addressed the gray, cement wall, for all the notice the lone, stooping, concentrated operator paid him. Dundas could not see the stare that shone in old Hippolite LeDou's eyes—the stare of inspiration; could not know of the circuit-break in the old man's nature.

"There!" shouted LeDou at length, leaving the key open. "Peace on earth and goodwill to men!"

"Amen!" chirped Malachy Dundas. "The deed is done. Now to get out of this place and meet Damoody."

"And bells shall ring, and whistles blow as the glad tidings take wing. Peace—"

"Say, are you off your nut?" Dundas demanded. "Bells and whistles when we're down under a sidewalk tapping a till? Don't want them to have the top of the sidewalk removed, a searchlight turned down on us and a band to play, do you? Come on! Let's see if we can jimmy our way out."

Muttering to himself, Dundas tried the door. Locked, immovable, stolid it was; and no other means of exit was visible. On the door he hammered, then waited. No answer. "Hell!" he ejaculated. "A chink would have to come down the long stairway and be prowling around the debris on the other side of the wall to hear me. All on account of you grabbing away that box in your excitement." He gazed ferociously at Hippolite LeDou, who was leaning against the old cement wall, holding his watch in one hand.

"Fifteen minutes gone and no noise," said LeDou.

Dundas ignored the queer operator and redoubled his efforts to get out. Divers attempts he made, hammered on the walls and pipes, yelled at the crevice at the bottom of the door; and then, desperate, as though realizing that he must force an exit, he drew from his pocket a knife and opened a big blade. With workmanlike deliberation and energy he began cutting through the thick door, near the lock.

Twenty minutes later he paused, turned suddenly and glared at the thin, silent man

still standing by the wall. "Why don't you do something, instead of standing there holding a watch and listening?" Then a dread suspicion must have come over him, for he sprang from the door and began an advance on LeDou, brandishing the big blade of his knife. "I know," he bellowed, "it's a trick! You're to pull some stunt and hold me till that other operator skunk gets the roll and ducks, eh? Going to double-cross me, eh!" Nearer he advanced, his tall, stooped body and shaggy head grotesquely horrible in the gray light.

"Well, no one can pull a deal of that kind with me and get away with it—"

"Forty minutes—listen! Hear! Hear!" LeDou cried in his piping voice. "Bells and whistles! Hear them!"

The tall man brought up abruptly, gazed up at the sidewalk eyes, and listened. Plainly, even to them, came the unmistakable donging of bells and the shrill diminuendo of whistles—few at first, then many—growing, swelling in sound, in volume. Weird noises jangled overhead; and atop the din, or through it, unmistakable as the bells, whistles, horns and tumultuous medley, came the sounds of shouting voices.

"Say!" Dundas shouted, a suggestion of alarm showing on his face, "Are you man or devil? There's something creepy about you, calling for your bells and whistles. The sooner I get out of here the better I'll like it." In three long strides he was before the door again, hacking, cutting rapidly, as if his very life depended on it; and all the time he worked the noise and jangle above, outside, increased. It was a roar—a tremendous, strident, unharmonious din.

One hour—two hours, and it continued, unabated, while Dundas, the big blade of his knife finally through the door, cut at the hole to enlarge it, for his lusty calls through it had failed to draw a response. Only occasionally would he pause long enough to turn and regard Hippolite LeDou who was sitting on the box, leaning against the wall, his thin face tilted upward; and always the great calm that seemed to emanate from that face turned Dundas back to his work with stimulated energy.

"The boob is crazy," he muttered the last time he turned to his work. "The mental strain and tension over sending that bank message was too much for—hello, what now!"

A noise on the other side of the door came to him. He stooped and put his eye to the hole. The trap at the end of the narrow stairs had opened. In the dim light, three men were descending.

"Hey, there!" called Dundas. "Open the door! Catch lock!"

As the door opened, Dundas tried to squeeze past. "No you don't, my hearty!" a gruff voice shouted. "Get back there till we look around a bit. We've got an open wire to the World Press to close, and if it's open here we'll want to know what you—"

"It's here, all right, Joe!" another voice broke in. "They've cut in on it for some reason and left the key open! Call a cop while Fred and me holds these birds!"

SERGEANT HENNESEY sat tilted back in his swivel chair before his desk. He was in a particularly happy state of mind, for he had been looking through a big window down onto Kearny Street for some time, wishing he could join the joy-maddened, noisy crowds. Of a sudden he was conscious of the fact that a policeman, ushering two prisoners, had entered.

"More bums," groaned Hennesey.

"Booked in detinue, Larry," the policeman shouted. "Picked 'em up in an undersidewalk space in Chinatown. Tapping a telegraph wire. Here's a piece of paper we found there—some kind of a message written on it. Captain wants you to put 'em through and report to him."

Put them through! More third-degree work!

"All right," Hennesey shot back. "Get into that room, you!" yelling at the short, thin-faced prisoner who was meekly holding his hat, exposing his bald pate on which was a livid cross. To the policeman Hennesey continued: "Hold that buffalo-face ginney there till I call for him."

Fifteen minutes later the sergeant opened the door and beckoned to the policeman. "Send down the hall to Reporters' Room and have Gleason of the Expositor step in here!"

"Jack," said Sergeant Hennesey when the reporter came into the third-degree chamber, "I was wondering a little while ago why your paper was not putting out screaming extras like the others."

"Oh, the Expositor doesn't take World Press service. Takes Continental. As yet we haven't received a word on the signing of the armistice. We're scooped on the peace story, I guess."

"No you're not, Jack, my boy. You did me a mighty fine turn once on a certain case. Now I'm going to give you an advance flash on something big—something for you and your paper to handle exclusively. You listen to me. All this noise is premature. This peace stuff is all bunk! See the lean old ginney sitting there in the corner? Well, he's the great apostle of peace—a telegraph Messiah, he is. He's a religious fanatic who cliqued in with a couple of crooks to tap an underground wire and send a phony pay message to the Third National Bank. Had a copy of a code message and a yegg along to coach him. Knows wires and the telegraph game like a book. Old timer, you know. He knows that Hudson, president of the World Press, is in France to send personally the important bulletins. When this old bird cut in on what he thought was the Third National wire he was surprised to learn that it was the wire to the World Press. The queer warp in his nature got the best of him. An inspiration came to him that he was a Messiah, sent to bestow peace; so he cut in on the wire and faked a clever, brief message to the press association and signed it Hudson. In his excitement he left the wire open, jerked away a box or something that let a door slam and lock them in a basement, where three linemen, quickly trailing over the line to close it, found him and another yegg and called an officer—"

"Can I interview him?" the reporter asked.

"Surely, Jack. Go to it. Get all the dope. Remember what I told you, though. He's a Messiah—a telegraph Messiah. I'll have the officer step in here while I'm clapping the other bird in the cage; and I'll bet he'll do come fine chirping when I tell him what wire was tapped and what the message was that went over it, and the further fact that I'm going to jump into the car and go over to the Third National and grab a certain Mr. 'Gillmore' by the neck an' bring him back. A precious trio we'll have on the blotter to-day."

Later, as Hennesey was leaving Detective Bureau he met Jack Gleason of the Expositor running down the hall.

"Gads, what a story!" shouted Gleason, pausing. "What a story! Something that will serve as a stop-cock on all this noise and make two avidious newspapers choke with grief and shame, for the wire's probably fixed now and the great error is probably trickling to them. Gads, what a show-up it will be—art and all—for I've 'phoned for a camera man to hurry over here to mug Hippolite LeDou. So long, Hennesey. We'll split a pint of Chianti in a little while."

And as the reporter hurried away, Hennesey heard him chuckle, caught the words that were shot back from up the hall: "Gads, what a story! Telegraph Messiah is right! He's a gift direct from heaven!"

Smiling, Sergeant Hennesey walked out into the noise and jangle, down the broad, stone steps and over the sidewalk flagging to a waiting department car.

IN the October number: "I'M A DEMOCRAT" *by Ramsey Benson,* the story of a railroad magnate who, while living in an age of high-priced specialists, cannot forget that he is living also in an age of democracy. "In an age of democracy," he says, "it pays to be a democrat."

THE RENEGADE RELATIVE

By WEARE HOLBROOK

Having "got religion," Uncle Steve is not a promising subject for hero worship; but eventually he justifies Jamesjee's faith in his badness.

POO! That's nothin'!" James G. Blaine Weems spat contemptuously and wiped his chin; he wasn't a very successful spitter, but he was learning. "That ain't anything! I seen my Uncle Steve take a big snake—out in the woods one day—he takes a big snake and grabs 'er by the tail and swings 'er around and 'Snap!'—just like a whip."

"'N'en what?" asked Tommy Thomas.

"'N'en what! What do you s'pose?" demanded the narrator. "Why, the old snake's head's off, that's all. He cracks their heads off jus' like a whip."

"Did you see him crack 'em?"

"Well, no," admitted James G. Blaine Weems. "He told me. It was down south where they's big snakes."

"What kinda snakes?"

"Moccasings."

"Ho!" jeered the doubting Thomas. "Moccasings is what Injuns wear."

"Moccasings is a kinda snakes, too," James declared.

"Well, over in the carnival at Decatur I seen a feller that *et* snakes."

"My Uncle Steve don't eat snakes. Only cracks their heads off. But when he lived in England he et eels—'most every day. I guess he about lived on eels."

"Eels!" murmured Tommy, overcome.

"'Lectric eels. Why, Paw says that after Uncle Steve had finished a meal off'n eels, you could get a shock jus' by touching him."

A visit from the famous Uncle Steve was impending. The youth of Alamela had been well primed for his arrival by James G. Blaine Weems. They had reveled in the adventures of Stephen Weems in Mexico as related by his nephew, had seen the full-rigged schooner he had carved from one piece of wood with a jackknife, and the stamps he had sent from all parts of the world. They heard how he had shot four niggers, one after the other, in a New Orleans gambling house, and had languished six months in jail at Hammond, Indiana, for insulting a justice of the peace. They had heard much and imagined more, and James G. Blaine Weems was ever leader of speculation.

Stephen Weems arrived in Alamela on the morning stage. Only his nephew and Tommy Thomas were at the stable to meet him. Weems, Sr., had to stay at the store until time for dinner and Mrs. Weems had to prepare said dinner. Neither seemed impatient to see Uncle Steve. They said that he didn't visit them often, but that when he did he stayed a long, long time.

As the stage clattered in, Tommy recalled the incident of the New Orleans niggers.

"I'd laugh if he took a shot at the driver. S'posin' he would jus' for fun, as he was gettin' out of the coach."

"Aw, no," James shook his head. "The old driver's a good old driver. He wouldn't shoot *him*."

James would never have admitted to Tommy that he failed to recognize his uncle. It had been two years since the last visit, and during that time James had so constantly associated his uncle with heroes of fiction, that he really expected to see some fanciful hybrid emerge from the coach—a cross between Robinson Crusoe and Nick Carter, a man with fierce moustaches curling over his bullet-scarred

countenance, and eyes like steel. In his imagination his uncle towered above the citizens of Alamela like a Gulliver.

He was secretly shocked and ashamed when a wizened little man in store clothes set down a bulging telescope and came toward him.

"Well, if it ain't Jamesjee Weems! 'Ow you've growed! You ain't forgot your Uncle Steve, 'ave you? And your little friend 'ere—I remember 'im, too. I never forget a face. 'Ow's your daddy, Jamesjee? I'm as 'ungry as I can be. You youngsters carry my portmantoo, and we'll go up."

"Yes," was all that Jamesjee said. Tommy said even less.

So this was the uncle who had roved the plains and defied death in a thousand forms—this little runt who looked like a book agent! This was the glorified individual, the Admirable Crichton for whom certain small boys in Alamela had waited with thrills of expectation. He looked as if perhaps he might have insulted a justice of the peace at Hammond, Indiana—an extremely sensitive justice. But the four niggers in New Orleans must have been accidents.

Tommy had forsaken him, and James G. Blaine Weems, dull with disappointment, trudged behind his uncle in silence. There seemed to be nothing about this fallen idol to warrant the tales that were current, not one redeeming feature. True, he was bowlegged, which might betoken years spent in the saddle. Jamesjee looked at him with awakened interest.

"Uncle Steve."

"Yes?"

"Did you bring your—revollivers?"

"Why, no! Of course not." Uncle Steve was silent for a moment. "Jamesjee, you know my life ain't what it should 'a' been? I 'ave been *real* bad. For many years I 'ave walked in evil ways."

"Yes," said Jamesjee hopefully. His uncle certainly was bowlegged.

"But now I 'ave seen the Light," declared his uncle solemnly.

"Vigorous Riggs busted the one in front of our house with his *noo*-matick air rifle. He said he was just goin' to plunk at 'er once to see how close he'd come. And very first time, he hit."

"Ah, I don't mean the street light," Uncle Steve informed him with patience. "I mean the great Light as was revealed to my perfane eyes at Cartersville by Elder Wilbur Martinson."

"Oh," said Jamesjee, uncomprehending.

His parents told him later that Uncle Steve had "got religion." He had vague ideas as to the process of getting religion, yet he felt that it was somehow responsible for Uncle Steve's loss of charm.

On his last visit Uncle Steve had brought him a present, a monstrous horn-handled dagger; Uncle Steve had smoked brown cigarettes and fraternized with the proprietor of the Caravan Bar, and Jamesjee had heard his father mutter something about "the black sheep."

Jamesjee received a present this time, too. He watched with interest the unpacking of the telescope. A book! Probably Oliver Optic—

But the customary ragged hero was not upon the cover. Instead, a jointless-looking angel supported with his wings the title "Life Lessons for Little Learners."

"'Ere, Jamesjee," said Uncle Steve. "I brung you a book. Read it regular. If I'd read a book like that when I was young I'd been a better man for it."

"O-oh!" Jamesjee breathed. His expression might have meant anything, and did mean considerable. He was a Little Learner, was he?

Stephen Weems's avuncular value fell below par. He was reformed beyond redemption. If he had once been a black sheep, he was now a woolley lamb. The brown cigarettes had been replaced by a respectable pipe; the proprietor of the Caravan was avoided as a leper.

Jamesjee hid his uncle's shame and his own from the neighborhood as well as he could.

"Nothin' so wonderful about your uncle, that I can see," deprecated Tommy Thomas. "He's just the same as anybody."

"Uncle Steve's been sick," was the defense. "He ain't well yet. You just wait'll he gets well." But Jamesjee had small hope of any recovery.

The coming of Jerome Hartshorn Marx, evangelist, dealt the ultimate blow. At the revival meetings Uncle Steve was rampantly pious; the disgrace was beyond Jamesjee's powers of dissimulation.

Night after night, in the huge tar-paper tabernacle in Folsom's pasture, Uncle Steve made a spectacle of himself before the eyes of Alamela. Always he sat in a prominent place on the front row of planks, always he was the first to come and the last to go, always he was the loudest and least musical in the hymn singing. He sought the company of Jerome Hartshorn Marx, and Jamesjee felt that the evangelist was a fit running-partner for his sanctimonious relative.

The meetings in the tabernacle bored James G. Blaine Weems to the verge of revolt. He was not blase or skeptical; he was merely ten years old, and was forced, for the ostensible salvation of his soul, to sit beside his uncle through lengthy, one-sided discussions which meant nothing to him. For a while he enjoyed watching Jerome Hartshorn Marx, who was tall and cadaverous, and whose blue chin nestled neatly between the points of his collar except when he threw back his head to toss the long black locks from his brow. But Marx's gestures were few and his shouting monotonous. There were other more interesting persons upon the platform. There was Miss Jones, for instance, who had come with the evangelist. She played the folding organ. It folded up into a big suitcase; Jamesjee had seen her carrying it up to the hotel, and it looked very heavy. He knew her name because Marx introduced her the first night. Having told the congregation where he had been and what he had done, he had said "This is Miss Jones, my accompanist." She had bowed, and smiled like turning a light on and off. That was almost the only time Jamesjee ever saw her smile, and he watched her a great deal.

She might have been very pretty but she didn't seem to care to be pretty. Always she knew just what to play, and usually she looked at the bare wall in front of her instead of at her music. The boards on the wall ran horizontally and were covered with big knots; perhaps she read music on the wall.

The members of the choir were recruited for the occasion from the village. Jamesjee knew them all—Judge Spangler's daughter Celia, Mrs. Jess Flatbush, Eva Flatbush, Curley Wrennels, Orval Russ and Madison Morley. Madison Morley, the veteran barber, was five-feet-one in height and possessed of a rattling bass.

They sat on folding chairs at one side of the platform, and sometimes, as they sang, it was very amusing to watch their faces. But Jamesjee preferred looking at Miss Jones, although she was never amusing. When Jerome Hartshorn Marx harrowingly described the tortures of the wicked until everyone seemed to cower, it was reassuring to look at her calm face. And when he gave out an extended, ecstatic forecast of the rewards and triumphs of virtue, and the whole tabernacle waxed exultant in its righteousness, there was no change in her expression, no trace of enthusiasm in her manner. Had she no fear of hell, no hope of heaven? Perhaps; but to pull the right stop at the right time was the important thing in her life. A discord was worse than damnation. Once she did bungle, and the little organ let out an irrelevant and irreverent shriek. Miss Jones blushed, the congregation tittered, and Marx shot her a glance that must have cracked the sixth Commandment. She never raised her eyes from the keyboard the rest of the evening.

But as time went on, Jamesjee noticed that Miss Jones gazed more and more in the direction of the choir. She seemed to be watching Judge Spangler's daughter Celia. And Celia was undoubtedly watching Jerome Hartshorn Marx. For two weeks she had been infatuated with the evangelist.

The object of her infatuation was not entirely unaware of it. He looked at her frequently out of the corner of his eye during the breathing-spaces in his sermons; he leered at her boldly but ingratiatingly as he paused to drink a glass of ice water, his little finger curled in vulgar daintiness.

Celia had never seen a man with all the

airs and graces possessed by Jerome Hartshorn Marx; Celia had seen few men. Her life was narrow and her mind was shallow, but no life is too narrow for dreams, and imagination does not require depth of intellect. When she had been presented to him he had—O thrill indescribable!—bowed and kissed her hand. To her that meant nothing less than love at first sight; to him it meant nothing more than strategy.

"Celia Spangler's got a case on the 'vangelist," Jamesjee ventured at the supper table one evening.

"What makes you think so?" asked his mother.

"Oh..." Jamesjee was clairvoyant and mysterious.

"I think they'd make a good match," declared his uncle. Mrs. Weems was not so enthusiastic, but at any rate, she said, Celia would never be satisfied with any of the young farmers around Alamela.

When Jerome Hartshorn Marx prolonged his services at the tabernacle another fortnight, people were not surprised. It was quite evident that he stayed to court Celia, and that Celia was more than willing to be courted. Although the engagement had not been announced, he took her home from the meetings every night, mincing his steps to hers, while she clung to his arm and gazed at him, enchanted by his words. Furthermore, Judge Spangler seemed to approve, and his opinion was law in the community.

So there was much nodding of heads, and smiling, when at the last session of the Great Mid-Winter Revival, Jerome Hartshorn Marx took the radiant Celia by the hand and introduced her to the congregation as his future wife, "whose sweet face and Christian spirit will ever be a source of inspiration to me in my humble work for the Lord."

Uncle Steve stayed after the meeting to offer his congratulations, and Jamesjee, freed from the prospect of further salvation, was willing to make concessions, and waited.

The night was cold and quiet, and their heels squeaked in the snow as they walked from the tabernacle. Jamesjee crowded close to his uncle like a young steer seeking warmth. Behind, with slower steps, walked Celia Spangler and the Adored One.

Turning the corner by Hilton's big tree, Jamesjee suddenly seized his uncle by the hand.

"Lookey!" he whispered.

The dark figure of a woman leaned against the tree, motionless. She did not notice them. Uncle Steve hesitated for an instant and then walked on. "It ain't any of our affair," he guessed.

"Why, she's laughin'," observed Jamesjee. "Or else cryin'." His limited experience with feminine emotion made him uncertain.

They halted, and Uncle Steve stepped toward her cautiously.

"You sick, ma'am?" he asked.

She did not reply, and he realized that he had probably been offensively blunt. He cleared his throat.

"Pardon me, ma'am, but is there anything I could do?"

The figure retreated further into the shadow of the tree, and after what seemed a long time, said in a choked little voice, "I—guess not."

Jamesjee, intrepid in the presence of his timid uncle, approached her. It was Miss Jones.

"Uncle Steve," he beckoned importantly, "it's just Miss Jones."

"Yes, it's just me," quavered Miss Jones, with a feeble attempt at gaiety.

"Blymy! So it is," exclaimed Uncle Steve. "I thought you'd went up to the 'otel. You better walk up that way with us, Miss Jones. Unless you was waitin' for *them*."

Miss Jones glanced at the approaching couple and dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief.

"Thank you," she murmured. "I—I was just going to the hotel."

"No you wasn't," Uncle Steve contradicted, looking her full in the face.

She dropped her eyes and walked beside him in silence. Jamesjee skipped ahead, casting frequent glances backward. The dimness of night hid the care-worn lines on her face, and she appeared almost beautiful, Jamesjee thought.

For several minutes no one spoke.

"What was the trouble?" asked Uncle Steve finally.

She looked at him in considerable doubt.

"Why, really, it was nothing, Mr.—"

"Weems, ma'am. Stephen Weems."

Another long silence followed. Uncle Steve was conducting a mental debate. He announced the decision aloud.

"There was something troubling you." He looked at her sharply. "Wasn't there something?"

"Yes—but why should I tell you?" she laughed in a sad way. "It's my own trouble you know. My very own."

"Let the Lord be your comforter, Miss Jones," admonished Uncle Steve piously. "Why don't you go to Reverint Marx for 'elp and guidance? You recall what 'e said—"

"Please don't!" she interrupted with a little shudder.

Uncle Steve looked at her in astonishment.

"I mean," she went on to explain, "you can't expect me to—well, of course, you—I suppose you take him seriously."

"Why, yes ma'am. Don't you?"

"Yes," she admitted, after a pause, "I'm afraid I do. But not in the same way."

"Don't you like 'im?"

"I've got used to him. Yes, I like him. I guess I always will. That's—the trouble, Mr. Weems."

"Ah, I see." Uncle Steve was much enlightened. "Then you're kinda cut up about 'im goin' to marry the Spangler girl? I see, I see."

Miss Jones looked at the ground and did not answer.

"Well," sighed Uncle Steve helplessly, "Reverint Marx is a mighty fine man. But he seems set on Celia Spangler. I don't see what you can do, ma'am."

Miss Jones burst out, "I intended to meet them and have it out, this very night. That was why I was waiting at the big tree. I had planned to tell her everything and settle the whole miserable affair before things went a bit further. But I guess they've gone too far already—beyond my reach. I would only hurt his reputation and make everyone unhappy, and we'd probably be out of a job. So I've decided not to say anything more about it. After all, there's nothing I could do. There really isn't."

Uncle Steve wagged his head mournfully.

"No, not as I can see, there ain't. Better just leave 'im go. Anyhow, Miss Jones, you ain't got any special claims on 'im, you know."

"No," replied Miss Jones in a low voice, "I'm only—his wife."

Uncle Steve stopped in his tracks.

"Wife!" he echoed faintly. "Why—why, I thought you was just Miss Jones. That's what 'e always called you. You ain't foolin' with me, are you?"

"Indeed I'm not. I married him four years ago, at Beulah, Oklahoma. He was running a medicine show there. Then he took up preaching and we went on the road, doing revival work, but he threatened to desert unless I took my maiden name. Most of the people who go to his meetings are women, and he says the women take more interest in him when they think he's unmarried. And now," she finished ruefully, "see what's come of it."

"It's a 'ell of a note," was Uncle Steve's definition.

"You know what I'd do?" he continued, after a moment's deep study. "If I was you I'd go right up to Celia Spangler and tell 'er the 'ole circumstances. She's powerful set on 'im, and she'll likely bawl considerable, but she's young and it won't last long. And deep in 'er 'eart, she'll thank you."

"No, no!" Poor Miss Jones was terrified. "I'd never dare do that. If Jerome—if Mr. Marx knew, or even thought that I'd told anyone, he'd nearly kill me. I've said more than I should to you, Mr. Weems—I don't know why. Promise me that you won't repeat it! It would only make more trouble for me. Please!"

Uncle Steve grasped her hand, and for a moment his grotesque little figure seemed to assume the proportions of a hero.

"I promise."

"You see," she explained hopelessly, "I'm the only one who *could* do anything, and I—I've lost my nerve."

THE DRIVER of the Alamela stage flicked his long whip impatiently. He was two

hours late with the mail for Bison, and there were two reasons why he was late—both of them in the back seat, very close together. His stage had often been late before, but never for a dum-fool wedding, and his horses had never been rigged up with ribbons or had shoes shied at them. If it hadn't been on account of Judge Spangler's daughter, he wouldn't have tolerated it.

His cargo was composed of a man, a mail sack, two trunks and two women. Although there was plenty of room behind, one of the women—the unattached one—preferred to sit in front with him. It was evidently not for the sake of sociability that she had taken the seat beside him. She stared before her steadily, in deep thought, but he made a half-hearted attempt at conversation.

"You're going to Bison, eh?"

He realized the inanity of his query even as he uttered it, and when she replied sweetly, "I don't believe you make any stops on the way," he hid his embarrassment in silence. In the light of what occurred later, he recalled her remark, and found in it something prophetic, almost ominous.

It was already dusk by the time they reached the half-way house, and the driver, more fond of his reputation for punctuality than of his horses, used his whip frequently. They rounded a heavily-wooded bend in dashing, tallyho fashion, but as the road straightened again, the horses suddenly faltered in prancing confusion and pulled back against the stage.

"Come out of it! Come out of it!" the driver shouted at them. "You got no call to act thataway."

It was immediately evident, however, that they had a "call" for their actions. An ear-splitting "E—e—yow!" sounded in the shadows, and a second later a masked man mounted on a buckskin pony, crashed out of the underbrush and into the road.

He was attired in all the jingling, leathery paraphernalia of the circus cowboy, even to a glittering six-shooter which he brandished over the pony's head. His neckcloth was drawn up over his nose and a broad-brimmed Stetson was pulled low over his forehead.

The driver, alarmed, reached under the seat for the gun which he had never used, but dropped it when the masked rider roared "Steady there!" Though he roared ferociously, he was none too steady himself. He was, in fact, very drunk, but not too drunk to lose his sense of dramatic effect. He lurched in his saddle, fired twice at the zenith and relieved himself of a blood-chilling "E—e—yip!" which ended in a hiccough.

"Pile out," he commanded thickly. "Get outa that li'l old wagon, all of you!"

The lady on the front seat obeyed with her usual calmness, and the driver, after a moment of helpless hesitation, followed. Celia, having fainted and revived, was enjoying hysterics. She finally managed to climb out of the back seat, weakly supported by the much-married Reverend Marx who was with considerable difficulty supporting himself.

"Jerome, Jerome," she moaned, "what will he do, what will he do?"

Jerome swallowed and said he didn't know.

"You better not rob the United States mails," quavered the driver, in maiden-auntly tones.

"'Oo mentioned robbing?" demanded the desperado with much dignity. "'M sure I never said anything 'bout robbing. You seem to think I'm a ordinary 'ighwayman. I'm not! I'm a wronged man, 's what I am. That cove there done the robbing." With a careless gesture of his revolver he indicated Jerome Hartshorne Marx and continued. "That soft-talkin' creetoor won my li'l Celia's 'eart, 's what he did, an' now 'e tries to steal 'er away from me—me as 'ave loved 'er since she was a li'l infant.

"I don't want your gold or your jools, folks," he concluded with a beery sob. "I jus' want my own li'l Celia. 'S all I want. Climb up 'ere front of me, Celia. We'll go 'ome."

"You!" the girl cried. "I never saw you before. Oh, Jerome, save me, save me!"

"I've always loved you, Celia—from afar. I 'ate to act rough, but it looks like I got to, 's what it does. Dick!" The masked man called over his shoulder, presumably to some accomplice hiding in the thicket.

"Dick, you keep 'em covered till I get outa sight!"

He spurred his pony forward, and as he passed Celia he leaned down and caught her around the waist, drawing her up on the saddle before him. Then, wheeling about, he paused for a farewell word, dropping his reins and placing a gloved hand over the mouth of the screaming Celia.

"My Celia," he shouted, "seems to 'ave a powerful passion for preachers. 'Ereafter, because of my ex-treme jealousy, I'll 'ave to shoot all cleerical gents found in 'er vicinity. So, 'orry-vore' as the Frenchman says."

The pony with its double burden galloped heavily over the road, accompanied by the shrieks of the captive. Gripped firmly in an unrelaxing and apparently insensible arm, she kicked and clawed vainly, ever bemoaning her fate to the highest heaven.

"Ain't you most tired yelling?" her kidnapper asked wearily, after a mile or so.

Her only answer was a noise quite like a siren.

"You see," he explained, "it would be kinda peculiar to go into town with you yelling that way. People won't know exactly what you say.'"

"What town?" demanded Celia.

"Alamela. If you'd kept your eyes open and your mouth shut, you'd a-seen where we're going."

"Do you know who my dad is?" Celia threatened. "He's Judge Spangler, and he'll get the whole town after you when he finds out."

"I know it. I'm taking you 'ome to 'im."

"But Jerome—my poor Jerome!" She burst into tears again "You drunken brute! I shall never forget the look on his face when you took me from him."

"Neither will I," said the drunken brute heartily. "It was some look, 's what is was."

"But don't think that he's afraid of you. He is my husband and he loves me and he will come back to me. I know he will!"

"Sure, 'e will," agreed the kidnapper, "if 'e's your 'usband."

NEXT morning, James G. Blaine Weems, boosted up the side of the little brick jail by the faithful Tommy Thomas, peered into the barred window at his Uncle Steve.

"Say, Paw says you were 'drunk'n' disorderly,' and you can't come to our house no more." His voice thrilled with admiration.

"Your daddy's right, Jamesjee. I got a gosh-awful 'eadache right now."

"He says you busted up the weddin'."

"I wouldn't be a mite surprised," remarked his uncle sadly.

"But he says it wasn't no weddin', neither, Uncle Steve. Anyways, not a *real* one. He says Judge Spangler found out somethin' about Reveren' Marx and that it wasn't a real weddin'. But Paw says that jus' the same, you're a detterment to the community."

"I'm bad, Jamesjee," confessed Uncle Steve. "Wild and reckless. Always was and always will be."

"Tommy, what'd I tell you!" Jamesjee called down in triumph. "'Member that time with the snakes, Uncle Steve? Tell us about how you cracked their old heads off."

"Jus' like a whip," supplemented Tommy eagerly, from the region of Jamesjee's ankles.

IN the October number: ETHICS A LA MODE *by Edwin Dial Torgerson,* a story about a young lawyer who gets laughed at by his closest friends when he persists in conducting his practice along strictly ethical lines.

ROSES OF CHARON

By CHART PITT

Butterfly Tom is still having his mail addressed to the Seattle clam flats, but he has not given up hope of reaching his native hills of Idaho before the snow flies.

THE first rains of the season had come and gone. They had whipped all trace of the smoky Puget Sound haze from the hills back of Seattle, revealing every line of their wild, rugged beauty. Butterfly Tom sat out in front of his driftwood hut, but he saw nothing to admire in the landscape that stretched about him. His weak old eyes wandered over the black acres of the tide flats, still sprinkled with the shells of clams that had filled his cooking pot the winter before. A hundred times he had taken a languid oath that next year would find him far away from the hated beaches, but oaths had availed him nothing.

During the warm days of summer he had struggled in his weak way, trying to get back to the Idaho hills, where the winter nights were clean and white, and the mountain air sparkled with a million frost-stars. He had tried and failed. Like a cursed ship, fated to search the seven seas in quest of the home trail, his best efforts had come to naught. The winds always had blown the wrong way. Now he was back once more at the tide flats, back with the clams, and the prospect of endless winter nights, black and dripping with the interminable Puget Sound drizzle.

Butterfly Tom seemed to have been built for that special piece of beach. The picture would not have been complete without him. A stranger passing that way would have sworn that the old man in his faded gray coat was a part of the local color, that he always had been there, and would be there till the end of time. The old mountain man would have taken no offense if this had been suggested to him. Well he knew that every beach had its beach comber. It always had been that way and probably always would. But there was going to be one driftwood hut that would be for rent; of that Tom was positive. He saw no means of escape. His stubborn old brain was searching for the way, but it was his nose that gave him the clue.

The autumn wind came ranting down across country and it brought the perfume of goldenrod that bloomed like a yellow blanket upon the hills. Butterfly Tom scrambled to his feet, and a look of eager purpose crept into his faded eyes. People over in Seattle were too busy making money to waste any time gathering flowers. They would rather buy them, and the old hillman had a hunch that he was going to help them spend some of their coin.

Butterfly had not been alone with his misery. His long legged son had shared in the fortunes of the clam pot. Just now the boy was up town. He loved to wander around Seattle, for there were many things to be found in the back alleys, such things as cigar butts, for instance.

The old man wasted no time trying to fit Clarence into his goldenrod scheme. He knew the long legged boy of old, and realized that if the flowers were gathered, he would have to do the job himself.

By the time the noon crowds were on the street, Butterfly Tom had become a flower vender, offering goldenrod fresh from the hillside for five cents a bunch. He was entirely sold out by the time the one o'clock whistles blew. As he tramped along the trail that led to the clam flat, he carried a few miniature bundles containing food, and several small coins jingled against one another in his pocket.

That afternoon as he clung to the steep hillside, gathering the golden blossoms for his stock in trade upon the morrow, Butterfly Tom's heart was filled with a boyish delight. Seattle had taken to the goldenrod with an eagerness that had set the old man's head swimming. It was a business venture in which there could be no such thing as failure. Tom's overhead expenses consisted of a ball of cotton cord, and what little food was necessary to keep him and Clarence in working order. The food expense might have been eliminated, had he cared to waste time digging clams on the beach.

The old man straightened his tired back from the goldenrod harvest. He smiled indulgently at the black acres of the clam flats below him. No longer did they hold any threat for him. Before the winter set in, Butterfly Tom would be speeding back to the Idaho hills, where the nights were white and frosty, and mud never lay in wait for unwary feet. Soon he and the long legged boy would be looking back at beach combing days, and laughing over their adventures in the land of the lowly clam.

That evening the old hillman was busy arranging his flowers for the morrow's trade. A beautiful autumn sunset had tempted him to cook his supper out of doors. A fire of driftwood was leaping in the purple shadows, and the peaceful hush of the clam flats was spiced with the breath of the boiling coffee. Upon a board was spread the contents of certain packages he had brought from the town. His appetite was whetted to a razor edge by the unaccustomed odor of the waiting food. From time to time he paused in his work, and listened for some sound of the boy's return.

A fretful little wind came down from the hill, and went dancing away across the flats, carrying with it the telltale scent of the boiling coffee. It was answered by the shuffle of feet far up the beach, feet that broke into a stumbling run and drew nearer in the night.

Clarence came puffing up out of the shadows. The cigar stub in the corner of his mouth had gone out. He chewed it nervously as he stood at the edge of the firelight, sniffing the unfamiliar odors of the feast. Then he slid down beside the old man and began eating.

Butterfly Tom passed the food, as a king in his castle might serve a royal guest. There was the fire of devotion in the mild-mannered eyes of the old derelict, as he urged the dainties upon the overwilling boy and accepted the plainer things as his own share.

"What you doing with all them weeds?" the boy sneered as he drained the last drop out of the coffee can.

"Them ain't weeds, Clarence. Them are goldenrods," Butterfly patiently explained. "I'm going to sell them on the street and get money to take us back to Idaho."

"Who would be fool enough to pay money for a thing like that. Why the hills are full of 'em," the boy scoffed as he explored the depths of his ragged pocket in search of a cigar butt. Having found the scrap of discarded tobacco, he got a light from the camp fire and began puffing away in reflective silence.

Butterfly Tom smiled as he patted the golden blossoms into shape. "It does seem too good to be true, now doesn't it? But them folks up there acted like they hadn't seen a goldenrod in years. I made two dollars and a half during the noon hour. I ought to average five or ten dollars right along till the frost comes and kills my flower garden. Goldenrod can't stand the frost. It turns them all black."

"You got any money left out of that two and a half?"

"Yes—a little," Butterfly hesitated. "Why?"

"I need some tobacco," the boy mumbled sulkily. "It makes my back ache, stooping down picking up cigar butts."

The old hillman reached a gnarled hand into his pocket and fished out a silver coin, and held it toward the boy.

"Ten cents?" Clarence snorted as he grabbed the piece of money. "A whole dime! Gee, but you are a generous old bird, ain't you? Suppose you think I can buy a whole tobacco factory with this?"

"I can't spare you any more now." There was a note of pain in Tom's cracked voice. "We got to save every cent we can, or we

won't make it back to the hills. It's liable to come a frost most any night now, and that will put an end to the goldenrod business."

Clarence made no answer. He sat humped up beside the dying fire, staring into the coals. Tom gathered up his flowers and started for the hut. He had a busy day ahead of him to-morrow, and would have to get to bed. In the doorway he turned for one backward glance at the boy. A smile of triumph was twitching at the lad's weak mouth, and the hillman knew that his son had framed up some scheme of his own.

The night wind came down from the hills, and filled the black acres of the clam flats with its lonely fret; but Butterfly Tom slept the sleep of the just and hopeful, for the dreamland paths upon which he wandered were bordered with goldenrod, and they led straight back to his native hills.

The old man was up early the next morning. Clarence had come stumbling into the hut sometime during the night, and was still sleeping among the ragged blankets. He was up in time for breakfast, however, and was ready to give his father a parting shot as he started off with his load of goldenrod.

"If I was going to sell flowers, it would be flowers—not weeds," he called spitefully after the old man.

On the corner of a busy street Butterfly Tom found himself caught in the giddy whirlpool of trade. There was something about the stooped figure in the faded garments which set him apart from the ordinary buzzards of trade who swarmed the curb, trying to sell lead pencils that would not write and jewelry which contained neither gold nor jewels. Tom's goldenrods were twenty-four carat, and people took to them like hot cakes.

Before noon he was back to the hills gathering more flowers. These also were disposed of, and Tom was richer by something over eighteen dollars. If the frost held off, they would not only get back to Idaho, but would have some money to take with them.

The sun had gone down behind the snow-covered Olympics before Tom got back to the hut. The first gauzy shadows of the twilight was beginning to gather above the clam flats, and flowers were to be picked for the next day's trade.

"Couldn't you give me a hand?" the old man ventured, as he stuck his head into the hut door. "I've done a whopping day's business, and I'm all tuckered out."

"I'm sick," Clarence groaned from among the blankets. "Got the rheumatism in my back, and besides I'm going up town to-night and got to get some sleep."

True to his promise the boy went slouching off up the beach as soon as he had finished his supper. Tom sat and watched him until he became a vague blur among the shadows and the craunch of his footsteps upon the gravel grew fainter and died in the night.

When the old man awoke the next morning Clarence was nowhere to be seen. Neither did he show up for breakfast. Tom was a bit worried. Something must have happened to the boy to keep him away from his breakfast, especially now when there was store food in camp.

But there was no time for brooding over personal troubles. Tom had embarked upon a commercial life, and like all good tradespeople he must hurry down to the street where men buy and sell.

The old man dodged in and out among the scurrying cars and at last reached the corner where he had done such a driving business the day before. Hardly had he taken his place when a fat man bore down upon him, with a dollar bill in his fingers. Butterfly Tom was reaching for the money, when the portly stranger changed his mind about goldenrods. Still flapping his rag dollar, he waddled across the street to where a lusty voice was beginning to bark up trade along the same lines.

"Be-uteful roses—only a penny a blossom," the rival huckster bellowed from the opposite curb.

Butterfly Tom nearly capsized under his load of goldenrod as he whirled around to see what sort of person it was who was crazy enough to sell roses at a cut-throat price like that.

The man across the street was all but

hidden behind a mountain of roses, blossoms of every shade and color known to the rose gardens of the West. Though the fellow's face was not visible, Butterfly Tom knew those long, lanky legs of old. He also knew that the goldenrod business had come to a sudden and violent end.

Being of a stubborn breed, the old hillman clung to his corner. He swallowed his pride, and met the competition of his degenerate son. Goldenrod took a drop from five cents to a penny a bunch, two for a penny, and finally a penny a dozen. But the frost was on the goldenrod business. No one even gave them a passing glance. All eyes were focused upon that heap of roses across the way.

The old man's hopes died hard, but at last he was forced to admit that he was beaten. With lowered head he staggered down the street, loaded with goldenrod that nobody would buy. But even in that black hour, the soul of Butterfly Tom lived up to its rough and ready creed. With supreme patience he tramped fully a mile out of his way and left his load of wild flowers upon the steps of the Providence Hospital, that its pain-cursed inmates might profit throuugh the hillman's misfortunes. As he was turning away, a white-headed old gentleman came out of the building, and smiled his approval of the ragged Samaritan.

As he plodded off toward the clam flats, Tom's mind was still dwelling upon his morning's adventures. "Roses at a penny apiece! It can't be done—not unless he steals them," the old man muttered his suspicions. "But them looked like hothouse flowers, and Clarence hasn't got nerve enough to break into a building."

That night Butterfly Tom sat close to the fire in front of the driftwood hut in an effort to keep out the growing chill that was beginning to invade the damp tide-lands. The wind was blowing out of the north, and great masses of clouds were rolling across the sky. From time to time the white faced moon would peep out from behind them, and flood the lonely clam flats with its light. Then once more the dead black night would hang unbroken along the desolate beaches.

It would have been more comfortable inside the hut, but something in the utter desolation of the windy night appealed to the old man's soul; for life once more had dropped into the minor measures of despair, where the threat of a clam pot loomed large and dreadful in the future.

True, he had money enough to take him back to Idaho, if he wanted to go alone. The temptation was great, and for a moment Butterfly Tom wavered, as his homesick soul struggled to reach the long-sought goal. He began pacing back and forth in front of the camp fire. But the storm passed as suddenly as it came. The old man seated himself beside the burning driftwood and smiled confidently into the red flames. He and the long legged boy had left the hills together, and they would go back together or not at all.

Then through the night came the sound of feet craunching on the gravel. The old hillman set the coffee can on the coals. Clarence would be hungry after his hard day in the rose business.

It proved to be the boy. He was smoking a cigar, but this time it was not one that he had found in the gutter. A shave and a hair-cut had improved his appearance. But there was a haughty, domineering air about him, more profiounced than usual.

"You don't need to wait supper for me. I eat up town," he announced.

Butterfly Tom faced the long legged boy across the camp fire. For once his voice was stern and compelling. "Where did you get them roses you was selling for a penny. You never bought them."

"I got them off a fellow who ain't got no more use for flowers. Something happened to his nose so he can't smell any more. He didn't charge me anything for them. I made seven dollars and twelve cents, but I spent it up town."

"Yes, and you spoiled my business. I would have made twice as much as that if you hadn't butted in with the roses."

"How much will you give me if I keep off the street and let you sell your yellow weeds. Make it fifty-fifty and I'll forget all about roses."

"Not a cent," Butterfly snapped. "I'm trying to save money to take us back to

Idaho, and it's as much for you as for me. And now you come trying to force me into giving you half of it for spending money. I'll die here in the hut, with my belly full of horse clams before I'll do it."

"There is a lot more roses where they came from," the boy began to boast. "I just love to sell flowers. You ought to have seen me—the most popular fellow in Seattle, if I do say it myself. I'll have to go up and see that friend of mine, and get some more flowers for to-morrow."

Butterfly Tom ate his supper in greater haste than usual. His face was like a gray mask. He sat huddled beside the fire, and did not look up when Clarence started for town. But when the boy was out of sight he seized his cap and started after him.

The old man had been a big-game hunter in his younger days. He had trailed deer across the open breaks of the Salmon until he had become an expert. To-night he found no trouble in keeping Clarence under surveillance without himself being seen.

Up along the waterfront and through dimly lighted alleys the strange pair made their way. Then the trail swung out among the suburbs where the houses were more scattered, and groves of second-growth firs added their blackness to the unlighted world.

At first Clarence had displayed a certain uneasiness. His gait was that of a night prowler in quest of unlawful loot. The father following behind him, found a fear growing in his heart, a sure conviction that the long legged boy had forgotten the honor of the hill folk, and had become a common thief, like the coyotes that sneaked across the Salmon River range. But now when the lights were growing more scattered, Clarence had thrown off his guilty caution, and walked upright and unafraid upon his mission.

They had been following a path through the firs, and had come out upon a broad driveway. Tom could hear the craunch of the boy's feet upon the gravel ahead, but the sky had grown darker, throwing the night world into an impenetrable gloom.

Then the sound of footsteps ended. Clarence was once more leaving the graveled road. A moment later Butterfly heard the peculiar protesting whine of overstrained wires, and knew that the boy was climbing a fence. The old hillman crouched in the weeds beside the road and waited. He had won. The secret of the roses was no secret at all. But his heart was full of bitterness for the boy. Honest people didn't climb fences in the night. The cut-priced flowers had been picked from a garden when the owner was not at home.

Then a new question flashed into Butterfly Tom's brain. Had he read the riddle of the roses after all? He couldn't shake off the conviction that those blossoms had been grown in a hothouse, and such places were not left open for every prowler that happened along in the night. But the old man had to know the worst. He crawled closer in the weeds, depending on his hearing to give him a clue.

The gale freshened. It sang its dismal song in the near-by firs, and was cold, as all winds are which blow down from the Silkirks, that off-shoot from the Canadian Rockies, where snows never melt among the dog-toothed crags. Lying motionless in the weeds, the old man began to feel the night-chill creeping through his shabby garments. He took one look at the surrounding country, to make sure he could find the place again. He would have to go back to the clam flats, and continue the investigations in the morning.

He clambered to his feet and shook the cramp out of his muscles. Before leaving he strained his ears for some sound of the boy gathering his cut-price roses out there in the darkness.

In that moment wind-harried clouds broke apart, and the bloated, white-faced moon looked down upon them, flooding the night miles with its dazzling light.

Butterfly Tom reeled back as though struck by an unseen hand. Just in front of his nose was a woven wire fence of elaborate design, and beyond it the marble shafts of a cemetery glared in the weird moonlight.

Like a man in a trance he stood and stared at the gruesome picture, till his eyes picked up a moving shadow against the sombre sod, where the long legged

Clarence was diligently hurrying from mound to mound, gathering cut-price roses from those "who ain't got no more use for flowers."

For a moment Butterfly Tom stood in silent horror, watching the grave robber at his gruesome work. Then a flaming anger swept through his lean body. His long nails cut into the palms of his clenched hands, as he coiled his muscles for the charge. There were some things a self-respecting hillman could not tolerate, and grave robbing was one of them. With his own gnarled hands Butterfly Tom was going to wipe out the disgrace to his name.

But the old man did not embark upon his punitive expedition. Instead, he cautiously dropped into the weeds, and began crawling toward the friendly shelter of the firs. For out of the shadow of a large monument several uniformed men with night sticks in their hands suddenly appeared. Clarence had fallen into the arms of the law at last.

An hour later Butterfly Tom edged his way into the brightly lighted room where the Seattle Night Court was in session. The long legged rose merchant stood at the bar of justice. His haughty insolence had fallen from him like a cloak, revealing a limp-souled creature whose very attitude was a whimpering plea for mercy.

The brilliant lights of the court room dazzled the eyes of the old hillman. A blurry haze seemed to shut out the detail of that grim judgment hall. A man who had been seated at a high desk now arose and began to speak.

"Thirty dollars fine, or thirty days in jail," the words of the sentence rang like the trump of doom in the hillman's ears. His people were simple hill folk, a bit indolent, and ignorant of the ways of the outside world, but never before had one of them gone to prison.

Butterfly staggered forward, a stooped figure in a ragged gray coat, but his fingers held money, twenty paper dollars, crumpled and torn from much counting.

"Don't send the boy to prison," he pleaded. "I've only got twenty dollars, but we will pay the rest as soon as we can earn it."

The man at the desk leaned forward and peered into Butterfly's face. Tom saw him but dimly through the mist that had settled in his weak eyes.

"Here is the other ten," the fine old voice was saying. "It would be a miscarriage of justice to humiliate a man who gathers goldenrod for the sick."

Butterfly wiped his eyes on his coat sleeve, and then he understood. It was the fatherly looking old gentleman who had smiled at him upon the steps of the Providence Hospital.

A half hour later the old hillman staggered along the beach trail that led to the clam flats, with a whimpering, penitent boy at his heels. He was penniless once more, but the hills were yellow with goldenrod, and there would be no more roses selling at a penny apiece just across the street. The long legged son had managed to gum up the machinery as usual. He had promised to be good in the future, however, even consented to help in the goldenrod harvest. There might be a chance yet for them to get back to the Idaho hills, where temptation wasn't waiting on every corner to lead the lazy son astray.

Butterfly Tom walked as though in a dream. He could hear the shuffling feet of the boy behind him. He drew his ragged coat closer about him and looked up with staring, frightened eyes to where the hillsides sparkled under their blanket of frost.

"The goldenrod will be black and worthless before morning," he groaned as he shuffled away toward the clam flats, where already the lonely winter winds were beginning to sob about the eaves of a driftwood hut.

IN HIS WIFE'S NAME

By ELWOOD BROWN

The secrets which Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Montgomery do not share are not many; one apiece is enough to make them miserable and destroy the unity which is their chief support in satisfying the eternal bill collector.

H-H-H-H!"

"Why, madam!"

"Not so loud. Don't you know that a bill is sacred? Even the trees have ears, not to mention my neighbors."

The collector for the Standard Cloak & Suit House ceased his eloquence and looked squarely into the pretty but now troubled eyes of Mrs. Spencer Montgomery. "My dear madam, why don't you pay them and save yourself anxiety?"

"Pay? Obviously I can't. And my husband must not know."

"I had planned to call on him after today."

"Don't do it!" Her voice was pleadingly anxious. "I know $400 is a lot of money. I will gradually pay it from my allowance."

The collector, a human being, figeted nervously between duty and a desire to please and finally succumbed to the debtor's charm.

"All right then. Do your best to save."

"Sh-h-h-h! Not so loud!"

"Is this something for the diplomats?" asked another bill collector, looking squarely into the darkly handsome, and now troubled, countenance of Mr. Spencer Montgomery.

"I don't want anybody in this office to know anything about your $400 tailor bill," returned the dunned.

"But man, if I don't worry you, if I don't indulge in publicity, how am I ever to break through your easy indifference?"

"I beg of you, give your voice the pianissimo. My wife drops in quite frequently. She might get hold of this."

"What of it? She knows you wear clothes."

"I'll tell you. She thinks I paid cash for my suits. Some time back I was foolish enough to try to teach some experts how to play poker. I've quit. I paid for my gambling in cash—"

"And for your clothes with promises?" intervened the collector, also a human being.

"You'll get every dollar, my friend, in time."

"But you're a young man yet," breathed the collector.

Spencer Montgomery gasped. "Any vague references to my estate are impertinent. I shall pay you inside of five years."

The bill man got down to A-B-C elementals. "I'm tired of chasing you. Either we shall sue you or take the matter up with Mrs. Montgomery. Your vulnerable point seems to lie there."

"Man, be moderate. You know better than to sue a lawyer. And don't, I beg of you, trouble my wife. My feelings for you and the clients you serve have always been of the kindliest. Now I have a $2000 fee coming in October first—"

"Imaginative?"

"No. Real, this time."

"Are you still banking at the Second National?"

"I am."

The collector expended considerable vocal and mental energy on his quarry, but in time exhausted his several lines of attack and backed out of the office to the immeasurable relief of the harried attorney. Not that Spencer Montgomery was hypersensitive; on the contrary, his experience with creditors might have been termed exhaustive, and he was hardened; but the gambling twist to the tailor's bill in ques-

tion and his wife's ignorance thereof, gave him a most ticklish feeling of uncertainty.

This point and another equally pertinent in the collector's grilling went home and gave the attorney pause. The man had asked him squarely if he was still banking at the same place. With $2000 arriving soon, the attorney thought that a simultaneous interest of hungry creditors might be destructive. He was willing to pro-rate a part of this sum to the more needy, but if one started an attachment on his bank account, others would follow and swallow the entire amount.

Montgomery believed in self-protection. This brought him squarely to a plan that he had had for some time in contemplation. His wife had been, off and on, clamoring for a separate bank account. Financial arguments, brilliant and colorful, if not always logical, had been a source of occasional disagreement between the couple. Both husband and wife were inclined toward extravagance, and each was a marvel at censuring the free-spending of the other.

Full of his new idea, the attorney hastened home to his wife and in glowing terms unfolded his plan.

"Gladys, you need the development that comes with authority. The steadying influence of responsibility, accountability and management is to be yours. My dear, on the first of October I am going to place $2000 to your credit in the bank!"

His wife's eyes opened wide in surprise and then narrowed with suspicion. "Spencer, there's crime in the air! I knew you couldn't steer that promotion company straight and not—"

He broke in. "I am in earnest. You have never tasted power. You have pleaded for independence, liberty, freedom! You have never known nor appreciated just how liberal I have been with you. I am voluntarily giving you this money, sui juris; I am taking some risk in doing this, but—"

"You mean you are avoiding attachments?" she asked shrewdly.

He looked up, admiration in his eyes.

She continued with excellent understanding: "You *owe* me $2000. For the first four years of our married life my family loaned you $500 yearly. You are only paying back a loan."

The attorney grinned. "Smarter than I accredited you, Gladys. I have the right to choose the debts I pay, and I select the longest overdue. Now, of course, you realize that this is the only money I have and must live on it. I am not giving you *carte blanche*. In matters of exceptional importance I shall expect you to give way to my judgment." Manlike, he expected to dictate.

He did not notice the settling lines about his wife's mouth as she answered quickly: "I will try to be reasonable as well as economical. And, my good, kind husband, I feel we are in for a wonderful experience. Watch your Rock of Gibraltar!"

For six years the team of Montgomery, man and wife, had enjoyed the vicissitudes of married life. It had been a striking team on the whole, and picturesque, with its members now in harmony, now out, sometimes pulling together, as often straining against each other; but always coming around in time and squaring off. Whatever their weaknesses—and they were many—each believed in the other and hidden secrets had had little place in their scheme of partnership. He had failed to report but one thing, his gambling, and she had given a clear account of all save the gradually acquired $400 gown account, which represented a folly that she could not mention in the same breath with her demand for financial liberty.

Now, with the prospect of ready money at her hand, Mrs. Montgomery's vivid imagination performed aerial somersaults, jumping from diamonds and pearls to tapestries, antiques, and around to dream-gowns. But stronger than her visionings came an eager desire to wipe out the secret $400 bill. Perhaps it would not be in the light of wisdom to liquidate it all at one fell swoop, for there were many obligations; but a good, liberal payment would be in order. She so promised the collector when next he called.

A short time after receiving the $2000 check and depositing it in his wife's name Mr. Montgomery received a visit at his

office from the credit manager of the Standard Cloak & Suit House. The caller, Jobson by name, was a soured, crabbed individual to whom a lost account was a calamity.

"I don't take much stock in you attorneys as collectors," he rasped, "but they tell me you are the exception. If you make good, you can have all our business."

Spencer Montgomery accepted, asking for a retainer fee of $50 and a 25% commission. Jobson closed, and the lawyer promised vigorous action on a number of accounts.

That night the husband told his wife of his new client. He did not note the look of dismay that the news brought to her face and the further apprehension as he remarked: "Why fool credit men will allow fool women to mortgage their all by running up exorbitant bills for frills is more than I know!"

She made no answer, reasoned correctly that her credit was still good with the Standard, and soon the subject changed to one of equal importance, the new scheme of finance; and it revealed an unsuspected trait in the character of Mrs. Montgomery.

Philosophers agree that there is no certainty in foretelling what a bank account will do to a woman. One school maintains as a primal result the tearing down of the will, giving way to an uncontrolled imagination which tends to produce a sort of pleasant hallucination, in which state a woman will wear out her wrist over her checkbook. An opposing school claims the sudden acquisition of a substantial fund tends greatly to increase woman's natural tendency to conserve that which is of value, with the result that she draws the purse strings tight.

Mrs. Montgomery, on receiving the $2000, paradoxically perhaps, had straddled both schools. Her first impulse had been to list the dozen or more extravagances of which she had dreamed. She was barely able to wait to fill her fountain pen to try out the new amusement. Her first check, for $200, was planned to be cashed and spent on impulse as she might please, after which she intended giving consideration to household expenses.

She had just completed the last cipher of the $200 when she stopped abruptly, sensing a strange rebellion within her. Some new element arose in antagonism and she looked long and lingeringly at the amount to her deposit. For some odd reason she hated to break the sense of totality; the desire to keep her fund intact was mastering. She tore up the check and decided to let the matter of finances stand until her husband should take up the question of disbursement with her.

Now, her husband, in his most pleasant voice, was suggesting a method of expenditure. "I would advise your paying the more urgent of household expenses; I need about $500 for office and personal obligations, and the rest we can keep."

"I shouldn't be precipitous if I were you," she returned enigmatically. "Besides, you promised me a taste of power."

"After the essentials are paid, yes. That's practically all the money we have, you know."

"Don't say 'we.' This is my money, which you owed me. You gave me a little peroration about stability, steadiness and so on. Now you ask in an off-hand manner for $500. Of course this would be a loan. Looking at the matter from the banker's viewpoint I want to know exactly what you wish it for and how long it will take you to pay it back. Remember it is my money."

Lawyer Montgomery gasped. A sudden thrusting forward of his pretty wife's lower jaw engrossed his attention. He knew what that rare act meant—it boded imminent trouble.

"Why, sweetheart," he said very mildly, "I didn't expect you to take me too seriously. I shall not demand an exact accounting from you. I prefer you not to ask one of me. I was liberal with you, and expect you to be liberal with me."

"For what specific purpose do you need the $500? Render me an itemized account." There was a certain note of finality—finality in advance—in his wife's voice that the husband did not like. With the $500 he expected to make payments on back office bills and in addition pay the importunate tailor $200 on account.

He was compelled to turn in a padded list, and in his hurry he used rather poor judgment.

"Altogether too much money," announced the wife. "Fifty dollars for incidentals, $25 for carfare, $50 for cigars—you never smoke a third that amount. I am going to lop this list just $200, giving you $300." Her own list, she failed to mention, was scientifically enlarged to cover a half payment to the Standard Cloak House.

Spencer Montgomery threw off his mild manner and adopted one more arrogant. "Gladys, a joke is a joke, and you know just what I meant by that responsibility talk. If you really, seriously want to run things on a business basis, I will try and get system, too. For the present I need the $500. I cannot be niggardly or close. Now make that check out and be done with this. I'm not holding you down. Be reasonable and kind."

She started to fill out the check, arrived at the figures "500" and stopped. "I don't think it wise to pay this," she said stubbornly, encountering that strange resistance again. "As you lawyers say you must show cause"

"Gladys, make that check for $500, or stand the consequences!" he flashed, suddenly losing his temper.

She came back like a spark from flint: "I never obey a command! I'll loan you just $300 and not one additional penny." Her voice had a ring in it suggesting the laws of the Medes and Persians.

The husband was dumfounded. He had believed in his control over her, and this sudden result of her "taste of power" was most disconcerting. If that money was to be doled out by her as she deemed fit he saw tremendous inconveniences ahead. To be sure, he, at various times in the past, had doled out to her—liberally, perhaps, but doled just the same. What man had not?

He started one of his cutting, sarcastic speeches, ending with a stinging demand and threat.

"Stop right there!" she said warningly. "Why am I doing this? Because I intend laying the foundation of the Montgomery fortune!"

"Heroics!" he returned cynically. "For a little while, this will seem good. Then some temptations will get you and you'll loosen like a flood! I know you!"

They wrangled a bit further, all to no purpose, and the husband finally resigned. "I can't take it away from you, Gladys. But it will be a chilly day before I try the experiment again."

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The bill man took the sop with poor grace. "I'll wait only a week, then come back again."

During the succeeding weeks Spencer Montgomery endured a season of travail. His wife placed him on an allowance of her own choosing, and she chose meagrely. Ruler of the exchequer, she dictated imperiously, and her husband, perforce, could only submit. But in matters outside the realms of finance she was unusually kind and considerate, striving to please him in every possible way.

And if she pinched him, she likewise pinched herself, setting aside a small sum daily until she had by degrees saved and remitted $200, or one-half of her suit account, to the Standard Company. Her methods were quite business-like. She lived with her bank book, carrying it with her on every occasion, and she used it as an antidote for every buying fever. If she saw a lovely piece of furniture costing, say, $75, she pulled forth her balance, made a mental subtraction, and refrained.

The attorney struggled along, helped by an occasional small fee, which he squandered as received, and cursed the day he gave his wife independence. The "Montgomery fortune" could go hang for all him. He wanted Montgomery comfort and ease. He was chewing nickel cigars, eschewing

pool and billiards, swallowing two-bit lunches, and altogether living as a man of brilliance has no right to live. And throughout it all, like a shadowing Nemesis, the tailor's man came for his weekly bit.

Then results began to accrue from his efforts for the Standard Cloak Company. Delinquent debtors preferred payment to standing suit; several checks in full and several on account, all made payable to the lawyer, were deposited in Montgomery's name. The attorney made no mention of the fact to his wife, for fear she might further prune his stipend.

The suffering husband had endured until he could endure no longer. The stringent economy, so foreign to his nature, strained him to the breaking point, and he reacted amazingly. With money again at his command he opened up, and that prodigally. He jumped from twenty-five cent to two dollar dinners, from self-shaving to the all a barber can give, from niggardly pinching to wide open spending.

And he did not stop with an increase of incidentals. He sought out some of his former friends of the card table and endeavored to square up with Chance. Swinging to the choicest philosophy of the Rubaiyat, he mixed wine with his brains and began plunging. The result was never in doubt. The lawyer drew more liberally on trust funds than strictest honesty calls for. He did not aim to exceed the amount covered by his commissions, but his estimates were vague and incoherent.

WHILE the masculine Montgomery was pursuing his riotous way, all was not well with his wife. She, too, had been subjected to a severe strain, and of a sudden she felt a veering from her carefully planned course. The call of her other being, long suppressed, was not to be denied.

One bright, glorious afternoon, when the shop windows looked their best, she passed by a succession of store fronts with a dazzling display that was altogether too alluring. She looked and longed. Temptation, with a thousand beckoning arms, reached out for her, and she struggled on the brink. She pulled forth her still opulent bank book, seeking to stem the tide that was suddenly sweeping over her. "I must not buy, I must not!" she told herself. From her book she glanced to a splendid mahogany table, a table that would put the crowning touch to her library; from the table her eye roved to an inviting velvet rug for the den; thence to a windowful of gowns—and her feminine desires swelled to the bursting point. In vain she fastened her eyes upon her bank treasure and sought to ground herself to the noble idea of the Montgomery fortune. The restraint was suddenly broken down.

She fell! The money was hers and available. She bought the table, the rug, some accessories, and was fast developing a veritable spending orgy when a brilliant and saving idea burst upon her. She hastened to the nearby Standard Cloak Company and bought on credit $200 worth of cloaks and gowns, equaling the amount she had previously succeeded in paying by hard endeavor. This checked the flow of cash, and she returned home with a part of her little fortune still her own; but with a high resolve shaken if not entirely shattered. If her husband at that moment had asked for the return of the family funds he might have been successful.

It was not very long before Mrs. Montgomery was again being subjected to periodic calls of the collector for the secret bill. She did not dare pay any great amount, for with her account materially lowered, she became cautious.

In time Attorney Montgomery received a letter from credit man Jobson of the Standard Cloak Company, demanding an accounting. The letter was unpleasantly brief and pointed; it implied that a voluntary reporting would have been acceptable some time back, and that a remittance should have been included.

Montgomery totaled his collections, deducted the limit in the way of commissions, and found a vigorous balance due the firm. He had been receiving occasional fees, but beyond consulting his natural optimism had taken no account. He was heavily short!

Facing cold facts, the attorney admitted his exact position. He needed $400 to

He was compelled to turn in a padded list, and in his hurry he used rather poor judgment.

"Altogether too much money," announced the wife. "Fifty dollars for incidentals, $25 for carfare, $50 for cigars—you never smoke a third that amount. I am going to lop this list just $200, giving you $300." Her own list, she failed to mention, was scientifically enlarged to cover a half payment to the Standard Cloak House.

Spencer Montgomery threw off his mild manner and adopted one more arrogant. "Gladys, a joke is a joke, and you know just what I meant by that responsibility talk. If you really, seriously want to run things on a business basis, I will try and get system, too. For the present I need the $500. I cannot be niggardly or close. Now make that check out and be done with this. I'm not holding you down. Be reasonable and kind."

She started to fill out the check, arrived at the figures "500" and stopped. "I don't think it wise to pay this," she said stubbornly, encountering that strange resistance again. "As you lawyers say you must show cause"

"Gladys, make that check for $500, or stand the consequences!" he flashed, suddenly losing his temper.

She came back like a spark from flint: "I never obey a command! I'll loan you just $300 and not one additional penny." Her voice had a ring in it suggesting the laws of the Medes and Persians.

The husband was dumfounded. He had believed in his control over her, and this sudden result of her "taste of power" was most disconcerting. If that money was to be doled out by her as she deemed fit he saw tremendous inconveniences ahead. To be sure, he, at various times in the past, had doled out to her—liberally, perhaps, but doled just the same. What man had not?

He started one of his cutting, sarcastic speeches, ending with a stinging demand and threat.

"Stop right there!" she said warningly. "Why am I doing this? Because I intend laying the foundation of the Montgomery fortune!"

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square his account. Various loans from relatives and friends which had been poorly handled had exhausted his credit. With an excellent knowledge of criminal law, the lawyer appreciated the fact that while he was not, as yet, quite an embezzler—for he had contingent claims on the money—he was dangerously close to the line. He re-read the cold business note of the credit man and shivered. He thought of the money in his wife's name and again he shivered. Her hammerlock hold might be shaken, but at what cost! At the thought of confessing to his gambling and near thieving he felt the tightening cords of a sickening fear draw about his heart.

His unpleasant thoughts were broken in upon by the tailor's collector. Of the milk of human kindness this latter gentleman, for the present, had nary a drop.

"You haven't played fair with me!" opened the Nemesis abruptly. "I hear you have been prospering and your payments have not been increased a nickel's worth. Either I get a good check from you or my boss fires me. Before I get severed from my job I'll tell your wife all about your gambling. I feel bitter enough to do anything!"

"Will $25 help you any?"

"Not this time. Nothing short of $200."

The debtor did not dare draw any large amount when facing the cloak house company shortage. "I can do nothing—"

"Then I'm going! Straight to your wife!"

"You may cause me a lot of suffering."

"I've suffered too. If you had to call on yourself as often as I have been calling on you, how you would love yourself! Good-bye and bad luck!" And he slammed out the door.

Scarcely did one trouble leave the door than another was ushered in. At first it did not seem such, for the caller was a clerk from Jobson's office with a batch of new accounts. Jobson, as yet, held to his faith in his lawyer.

"He's pretty grouchy," said the newcomer, "for he just tumbled this morning to the fact that one of our slow customers, Mrs. Gladys Montgomery, happens to be your wife."

"My wife owes the Standard!"

"Oh, that's all right; but it might have been policy to have mentioned the fact. He asked me to bring back a report and a check."

Spencer Montgomery looked at the ancient date of a part of his wife's bill, and groped for a meaning. "It's strange I never heard of this before," he muttered. The unexpected discovery that his better half had not, in the past, been all candor and frankness came almost as a shock. He recalled that in their numerous financial battles this bill had never raised its head. The thought led to one more distressing. How many others might she owe? Perhaps this might explain the real motive back of her alleged desire to establish the "Montgomery fortune." And if so, perhaps—good heavens!—the money might be all spent! And he needed help just now to keep his name clear. Subconsciously his mind brought him to consideration of the clerk's request.

"I haven't the data ready as yet. If you will wait an hour, perhaps I can get it into shape."

Montgomery pawed and shuffled through a number of papers, made notes and memoranda, with the purpose of appearing too overworked to be ready with his report, and eventually asked a postponement for a couple of days. The clerk left.

Then Montgomery phoned his wife. There was no answer. By now the tailor's minion must have been there and his gambling secret known. How would she take it? Would it throw her into a violent temper, or would it act as a canceling of secrets? Would she pay the man? He could not decide. His wife, under the influence of money, was an enigma.

How much money remained? Vaguely he had believed it to be $1000. That would be ample. He breathed easier.

He resolved to go home and unburden his soul. Though a little shaken, his faith in his wife returned. What was one secret each, anyway, in a lifetime?

He locked his office and took the elevator down to the sidewalk. And there he met his wife. Her face was radiant, but with a lurking anxiety. "Spencer, you've gambled! It was a terrible blow to me, but

I've forgiven you. I've kept a secret, too. We need confession. See, I have begun by paying the tailor. Here's his receipt!"

"And, Spencer, I've done something deliciously terrible. I've bought a car! A dashing runabout, a Singleton—the one you've always wanted!"

His jaw dropped, in wonder, in fear. He turned to her, but before he could make a first protest, she loosened another flood of speech.

"I never want money in my name again! It has been a terrible trial to me. I am not made to found any fortune, or take financial responsibilities. Do you know, Spencer, my nature has been torn between an awful desire to hang on and another, equally as strong, to let go. Part of me wanted to keep it; part was wild to spend it. When the tailor's collector called and told me of your past gambling, I was in the throes of conflict. I had tried out the car, but hesitated at closing. I paid your bill partly to justify my intended course of action, for when I realized how you kept a vice from me, I decided to loosen all restraint and—I bought the car. Now I am sorry. Let's go to the office where we can have a good talk."

Spencer Montgomery's face was drawn in anxiety as he seated himself in his private room. "Gladys, if you are through, I have something very terrible to tell you. My confession will equal yours. I am in a dangerous position. Indirectly I counted on the money you had. I played free and loose and took some fearful chances. I have spent $400 due a client, and I don't know how to replace it!"

She looked startled and afraid. "You mean—it may be criminal?" She struggled a moment, facing the unexpected peril; then mastered herself, and with an intuitive movement drew close to him, all the protective instinct of her woman's nature shining in her eyes. "Spencer, the money is all gone, but there must be some way out, some escape! We are face to face with a serious danger. My husband, we will fight it out together! Now, can't we make some quick turn on the automobile?"

The phone rang and Jobson's irritating words came across the wire. "I'm on my way over to see how we stand. Be ready for me."

Spencer Montgomery's face paled in sudden fear, and he clutched his wife closely to him.

"I'll stay with you," she whispered, "and take the blame!"

"You shall not. I—"

Again the phone rang and the attorney caught the cut-and-dried voice of a bank official. "This is the Continental National. I want to get in touch with Mrs. Montgomery at once. There is no response at her residence."

"Mrs. Montgomery is here. She will talk with you."

"Mrs. Montgomery, a check has been presented for payment by the Singleton Automobile agency for $750. This overdraws your account $75. As you are making no new deposits, we do not feel like honoring it. Can you bring down the difference?"

Mrs. Montgomery, clapping her hand over the telephone mouthpiece, turned breathlessly to her husband. "We're saved, we're saved! I overdrew! I overdrew! Thank God, I overdrew!"

"Thank God, you acted just like a woman!" came words pregnant with relief from the distraught husband.

"Don't pay the check," the wife almost shouted to the bank's representative. "It's all a mistake. I am returning the car!"

THE financial problem of the team of Montgomery never reached a perfectly satisfactory solution. In the nature of things it could not be. Though the experiment of depositing money in Mrs. Montgomery's name brought the couple to a clear and frank understanding, it did not seem a feasible, fixed policy.

The nearest means to safety lay in padlocking the account to the extent that every check required two signatures, and each member of the partnership made out checks for the other's expenses. A solemn agreement to this effect, before a notary, resulted in a real beginning of the "Montgomery fortune," which, however, now and then has been threatened to its very foundation.

SKILLETS AND DREAMS

By ANNA BROWNELL DUNAWAY

Mrs. Meredith is convicted on circumstantial evidence. But then, as Auntie Miller might well observe, a woman hasn't a chance before a jury of women.

THERE is no longer any doubt concerning the road to a man's heart. As to woman, it has been said, rather epigramatically, that she has as many reasons for marrying as there are women. This, doubtless, accounts for her occasional rather paradoxical choice.

But whatever Mrs. Meredith's motive was, she kept it to herself. Her name plate read, "Mrs. Julius Clyde Meredith," but, aside from that circumstantial evidence, there was never any allusion to her husband in any manner, way, shape or form.

And, to add to the mystery, there wasn't a memento hanging on the walls of her suite in the Martha Washington apartments that would lead one to the conclusion that Mr. Meredith had, in the language of the obituary notices, been called up higher. The very absence of such adornments tended to make our pretty neighbor an object of more or less suspicion among certain narrow-minded folk who adhered rigidly to framed reminders of a soul's decease.

"She's no more a widow woman than I am," opined my washerwoman, Mrs. Tuppeny. "She ain't got no memorial tablet nor wreath of immortals nor a crayon portrait nor a weddin' certificate. What's more, I've cleaned her rooms from one end to the other, and they ain't no sign of a gent about the place—nary a spittoon nor a peeknuckle board nor a poker chip. Then again, if he ain't dead, and if he ain't there, where is he at? Answer me that. Mark my words, she's up to some divilment. They do say," she concluded darkly, "that she's a woman as is leadin' a double life."

For my own part, I could not think of Mrs. Meredith as an adventuress. On the contrary, she was as sweet and lovely a young person as I cared to have in such close proximity to Henry. Nor was it long till he, with his usual unerring taste in the matter of pretty women, discovered her charms. She had scarcely had time to get fairly settled in the flat, when he observed ingenuously:

"By the way, Nell, have you called on our new neighbor yet? It strikes me that she looks rather lonesome. Take it from me, she's there with the goods. She's a humdinger—a stemwinder—a peacherino, a dear!"

"You appear slightly interested, Henry," I remarked sweetly.

"Within marital limits, of course," he qualified. "I tell you, Nell, there is something positively alluring about widows. It adds a sort of halo to their brow. Believe me, old girl, I am positive you'd score as a widow."

How is that for being 'damned with faint praise?' However, with true, wifely discretion, I let it pass. As I have aforetime observed, it is poor taste to look a gift horse in the mouth. After a week or so I called on our pretty neighbor. In due time she returned my visit, and we grew to be quite friendly—I had almost said chummy. I make it a point to cultivate women in whom Henry is interested, on the same principle that I would rather have a son of mine play cards on the library table than in some isolated barn loft.

But, though I kept my eyes and ears open, I got absolutely no light on the subjects of the elusive Mr. Meredith. The whole thing certainly smacked of mystery, the more so as ugly rumors began to be afloat.

"Van Skyke was telling me," observed Henry one day—the Van Skykes lived on the same floor—"that he hasn't seen hide nor hair of Mrs. Meredith's husband since she's lived there. Hints at such things as a jail sentence, desertion, or confinement in an institution for the feeble-minded."

"Of course, Van Skyke ought to know," I returned. "His imagination puts him in a class with Edgar Allen Poe. If you men will kindly let Mrs. Meredith alone—"

"But the men just won't let the women alone," grinned Henry. "It's the nature of the brutes."

"Anyway," I contended, ignoring Henry's deduction, "I won't listen to a word against her. Maybe Mr. Meredith is a delusion like Dickens's Mrs. Harris."

"Ugh-huh," snorted Henry disgustedly. "Believe me, Nell, with the fair sex it's the real thing or none. Not that the matter concerns me at all, but if your husband stayed away two months, I believe you'd start proceedings."

Henry had departed and I had gone about my duties, when I was startled at hearing a little, choking cry come from an open window of Mrs. Meredith's apartments. Our house and the flat are very close together, and my windows, too, were open wide. I started involuntarily to the window, but at that moment, Mrs. Meredith's window was pulled down and the shade lowered.

Coming on top of Henry's disclosures, it certainly was mysterious. The plot was thickening. I watched the window at intervals, but all afternoon the shade remained lowered. Though well aware that curiosity once killed a cat, I finally decided that something should be done. Perhaps she was ill—alone and unattended. But before I was quite ready, the window went up and the white curtains fluttered serenely in the faint breeze.

In response to my knock, Mrs. Meredith, in a blue negligee, opened the door. She apologized for her disheveled appearance, but, aside from that, was curiously reticent. Excusing herself to dress, she left me alone in the living room. With a wife's detective instinct acquired from her marital experience, I searched the walls to find, perchance, some evidence of widowhood that had escaped Mrs. Tuppeny's argus eye. But there was not a single man's picture to be seen. There was not even a smoking stand nor a pennant nor a photographic display of movie stars. From the bedroom adjoining, I caught a glimpse of a dainty blue and white bed. There were embroidered pillow slips but they bore no monogram. I was baffled. My search had led up to a stone wall.

Mrs. Meredith now emerged from her dressing room, looking for all the world like a picture taken from an old copy of Godey's Lady's Book. I remember looking through them in my grandmother's attic when I was a little girl. They fascinated me with their quaint, old-time grace, just as Mrs. Meredith did now, in a short-waisted gown of white voile splashed over with pink rosebuds. There was an air about her, somehow, quite different from the conventional up-to-dateness of Westerville folk. Her clothes seemed as if they belonged, and they were of a rich simplicity that costs. I found myself wondering from what magic fount all this elegance came. Perchance, Mr. Meredith was a speculator.

"It is foolish," said my hostess with a girlish smile, "to have been crying when you came. But I awoke with a blinding headache. I had some callers last night that quite upset me. They seemed bent on putting me through the third degree. One had the temerity to ask me if my husband were deceased, and, if so, would I not care to ask the prayers of the congregation in his behalf."

I laughed outright.

"That sounds like Mrs. Dorset. If I were you, my dear, I wouldn't pay any attention to them. Everybody has a right to his own skeleton."

She looked at me oddly.

"There isn't any skeleton, really, Mrs. Miller," she said. "That is—I could hardly call it a skeleton." She bit her lip in an effort to keep from crying. "I sometimes think I will tell you. I must tell somebody—"

There was a step outside in the corridor. Mrs. Meredith sat up stiffly, her old, dis-

tant, aloof manner enveloping her like a cloak. Whoever it was, passed on down the hall; and she listened absently as the footsteps died away.

"You can't have been married very long," I hazarded, with a view to calling her back to the subject. "You don't look a day over eighteen."

She laughed merrily.

"And I had thought," said she, "that I was about ready for a home for superannuated teachers. I have taught five years."

"Impossible!" I exclaimed.

"But it's true. Finally, I got so tired of it all that I was glad to—to"—she colored, and looked away again to the window.

By this time I was assured that Mr. Meredith was in the land of the living. There was no air of brooding melancholy in her tones to suggest that he had been called to his reward.

"I suppose you hear often from your husband?" I inquired casually.

Well, really, you should have seen the blush that spread over her face. And there was, in her blue eyes, a sort of hunted, trapped expression. What could it mean but that the mysterious Mr. Meredith was in hiding—possibly he was an embezzler, a white slaver, a bootlegger! What if he were a spy and she an accomplice? Dear me, it is dreadful to own up to the wild suspicions that swept over me as I sat looking at Mrs. Meredith. But, as I have often observed, married women are prone to become cynical.

After a moment, she answered vaguely, "Why, yes, of course. Westerville," she continued, as if to change the subject, "is such a quiet, sleepy little place. It is restful after Sioux City—"

"Sioux City!" I interrupted. "So that is where you hail from. I wonder if you know Henry's brother—a young lawyer there?"

"I do not recognize the name, at all," she returned. "One knows very few people in a city." Suddenly she turned to me with an impulsive gesture.

"Mrs. Miller," she said, "I feel that I owe you an explanation. As it is, I know that you think I am under a cloud. I can't bear to have you deceived in me. I am going to tell you—"

There came a resounding knock. Mrs. Meredith's manner again changed instantly. She advanced to the door with her aloof air.

When I saw Miss Hodge, the town gossip, standing in the doorway, I embraced the opportunity to slip out. Miss Hodge, under cover of examining my embroidery, whispered sotto voice, "I'm going to find out her husband's business if I have to use a fine comb. Mrs. Dorset told me she seen her brushin' a man's coat."

I'll admit, there are times when I blush for my sex. I could have boxed her ears, the catty thing. As it was, I deigned no reply, but hurried home. And who should I find there, stretched out comfortably in the Morris chair, but Henry's step-brother, Mortimer Gay.

"Hello, sis," he greeted. "It's a wonder you wouldn't be home to welcome a long lost brother. Where have you been?"

"Well of all the nerve, Mortimer!" I returned severely. "And you didn't let us know! How do you expect to get your name in the pot, and where do you expect to go after your demise?"

"Didn't know I was coming till I got started," he grinned provokingly. That was Mortimer for you—erratic, impulsive, with not a thought for convention. I have never quite forgiven Mortimer for hiding under the davenport the night Henry proposed to me. He was about ten or eleven at the time, and he has declared ever since that what he heard that night soured him on proposing for himself. However that may be, he never seemed to care a bit for girls, though he has had them thrown at him ad limitum.

"Came down to look after a little legal business," he further enlightened me. "This leaves all well in Si-ox City, as the gentleman from Ioway calls our little burg, and hopes these few lines will find you the same. Where's Hen?"

"I'm looking for him any minute."

"Don't want any legal advice yourself, Nell? After thirteen years of matrimony, I should think you'd need some. What about divorce and alimony—"

"For the love of Pete!" greeted Henry from the door. "See what the cat's dragged in! Mort, you old scoundrel, you, don't get Nell started on alimony! When did you blow down? Still heartwhole and fancy free, eh, Mort, old boy? If so, we've got a little widow next door—"

"Widows are not in my line," declared Mortimer loftily.

"Why, maybe you know her already," I exclaimed, struck with a sudden idea. "She's from your town. Meredith's her name—Mrs. Meredith."

"I am thankful to my Creator," said Mortimer, "that I do not. What's more, I don't want to. 'I'd rather be a dog and bay at the moon' than to meet a widow."

"Here, too," affirmed Henry virtuously. "If one of 'em tried to kiss me, I'd fight her to a standstill. Not that Mrs. Meredith ever tried—nice little body. Runs in often—"

Mortimer looked about nervously.

"On the square? Then I'll go down and call on a few of the old cronies. I wouldn't run the risk of meeting one for a farm—"

Henry interrupted him soothingly.

"Right after dinner, Mort. It's ready now. Bear up. Why look on the dark side? 'Beyond the Alps lies Italy.'"

But although Mortimer returned banter for banter, I could see that he was worried. As soon as the meal was concluded, they left, with scant ceremony, leaving me not a little peeved as women will be, over the clanishness of men. I notice that the sex can talk very volubly to women before marriage, but after—well, they'd rather stick off with their kind, and discuss politics and socialism. They seem to think a woman's intellect beneath them.

I had sat alone for perhaps an hour, when all at once I had an inspiration. Why not get even by inviting Mrs. Meredith over? The more I thought of it, the more I enthused over the idea. I really gloated over the thought of Mortimer's discomfiture when he arrived to find the widow after he had run away to escape her. There is more truth than poetry in the poet's idea of a woman scorned. I took down the receiver with the same satisfaction I used to feel when I stuck out my tongue at various boon companions. Without more ado, I called for Mrs. Meredith's number.

"Mrs. Meredith talking." The sweet, even tones at the end of the wire almost made me jump. "What is it? Oh, you are alone—you want me to come over and sit with you awhile? I'd love to—thank you. It's dear of you to ask me. I watch the light in your cottage so much—it seems so cozy. I'll be right over."

I chuckled to myself as I hung up the receiver. But as I listened for her step, a vague foreboding seized me. What if she were an adventuress? Where there is so much smoke must there not be some fire? Was she the ingenious girl she appeared to be, or merely a consummate actress?

At her timid knock, I opened the door. She wore a gray, clinging gown with a bunch of violets at her belt. In the shimmering moonlight, there was something very fair and lovely about her. Her head was bent gracefully, and she reminded me, with the splash of lavender, and the sheen of gray and silver, of a poem I once read, called "Asters In The Rain."

"I was just longing to talk to some one," she said, stepping in. "The flat dwellers all seem to go out evenings. And now that I'm here"—again that shamed flush spread over her face—"I want to finish telling you what I began this afternoon when Miss Hodge came. Mrs. Miller, I am not what you think me at all. I have been deceiving you—"

For the second time in the course of her would-be confession, there came an interruption. This time it was the unmistakable tread of masculine feet. Henry and Mortimer had come home! My hour had come! I felt like the avenging nemesis in a melodrama.

"Why, good evening, Neighbor," bowed Henry. "An unexpected pleasure. Let me present"—he stopped short, staring from one to the other, his mouth fairly agape. Mortimer's face was far from showing chagrin, and as for Mrs. Meredith, her face was white and she had risen and grasped a chair back for support.

Mortimer started forward with outstretched hands.

"Miss Haskett, how do you do? I little expected to see you in the wilds of Westerville! So this is where you've been!"

"Here, here," interposed Henry. "Don't call people names like that. She's Mrs. Meredith. You can't expect people to stay single just because you do."

"Mrs. Meredith!" stammered Mortimer. "I—I don't understand. I read nothing about it in the papers. Must have been very sudden. Allow me—to extend felicitations. Meredith's a fortunate fellow."

Mrs. Meredith faced us as she might have faced her inquisitors in the days of the rack and the thumbscrew. Her eyes avoided Mortimer's. She now spoke in a low, clear voice, looking neither to right nor left.

"Mr. Gay is quite right. There is no Mrs. Meredith. I am merely Estelle Haskett—an imposter, hiding under an assumed name—"

"It's not true!" broke in Mortimer. "If you're hiding, it's for some good reason. I believe in you, Miss Haskett—Estelle!"

She smiled gratefully and continued.

"After all, there is not much to tell. You know I told you, Mrs. Miller, how tired I was of teaching. I have made my way alone since I was fifteen. My parents died when I was a child, and I have been tossed about from pillar to post I used to dream of what a real home would be. Sometimes, I used to don an apron and cook on a gas jet out of sheer longing. Well, a few months ago, a distant relative died and left me a little money. And I just decided I'd take it and go off somewhere, and quit teaching, and play at keeping house. My mother's name was Meredith, and I dimly remembered hearing her speak of Westerville as her girlhood home. So I came, and was so happy for awhile till people grew suspicious about my—my—husband—"

She was crying. Ah, Estelle, daughter of Eve! The next thing I knew, Mortimer was bending over her—Mortimer, the cynic, the woman hater, the invulnerable!

"Estelle," he murmured, "let me stand between you and these prying old gossips. How could you have given me such a fright, sweetheart?"

Henry stared at them dazedly.

"If this be I as I suppose it be," he observed vacuously, "kindly tell us how you happen to know Mrs.—er—Miss Haskett, Mort. I don't seem to get the missing link."

Mortimer laughed gaily.

"She happens to room right across from my landlady's—or did. Our windows are directly opposite. I got in the habit of watching her sitting there with her books and papers. And one evening I saw her cooking. She had on a ruffled apron and her sleeves were rolled up, and right then and there something hit me between the eyes. If you could have seen her, and that blessed skillet, and those cheese dreams—"

Henry groaned. "The poor nut calls a chafing dish a skillet! Stark, staring," said he. "Come on, Nell, let's get out of this. Ere we part, however, I would make one suggestion. How about an enlarged portrait of the late Mr. Meredith?"

A gilt-edged edition of Paradise Lost just missed Henry as he slid through the door. I looked back, a la Lot's wife, as I closed it gently. And what I saw was sufficiently convincing to assure anyone who is still in doubt, that for Mortimer Gay, skillets and cheese dreams were about to become a blissful reality.

ANASTASIA BOORAKES—SPARTAN *by Ioannes Merkures* is a story of modern Greece and more modern America which will appear in the October number. It is a sympathetic recital of the adventures of an old Greek mother who sets out to fetch her prodigal son home to the fold.

THE PERCEPTIVITY OF PERKINS

By G. M. L. BROWN

A well meaning but bungling father-in-law may rival the much maligned mother-in-law in creating discord in the household of the younger generation.

R. Perkins had gone to his room to dress for dinner. This may have been in deference to the butler, for before the advent of the latter he had always worn his business suit until the nightly exchange of tweed for silkiline. And as cause and effect are inseparably linked in the chain that binds us to our destiny, it is just possible that the dress suit and its concomitants were responsible for his growing irascibility. Be that as it may, Mr. Perkins had lately evinced a nervous tension that foreboded a domestic cataclysm. Mrs. Perkins, the cook and the cat alike divined it, and were reduced to a state of primordial dread awaiting the dynamic outburst. The professor was the one member of the household who remained serene.

Professor Torrington, Mrs. Perkins's father, who was paying them a prolonged visit, was in the study arranging his notes for the fourteenth chapter of the second volume of his monumental work on the "Psychology of Observation." This was to be entitled "Irrelevant Perceptivity," a faculty, according to the professor, that was fast falling into disuse. "Certain of our sensory apparatus," he had just written, "instead of expanding with reason and cognition, are being rapidly relegated to a sub-conscious plane, where objective percipience is practically an inhibited function." Which might be taken to signify that brainy people are becoming less alert and observant, a fact that the non-intellectual members of the household had long since noted and commented on.

Here the professor stopped, for the very excellent reason that there was no longer sufficient light to decipher what he had written. Startled by the semi-darkness that had so suddenly enveloped him, and at a loss to account for the phenomenon in any other way, he concluded that his eyes were at fault and that it was high time to consult an optician. "In the meantime," he remarked, "it might relieve the ocular congestion were I to postpone the completion of this chapter and conduct a few demonstrative experiments. The text certainly lacks concrete illustrations, and their tabulation will be a simple matter when my eyesight has improved.

"And that reminds me," he continued, relighting the forlorn remnant of a cigar, "that I have an experiment in progress at this very moment, an experiment that may require considerable—er—amplification."

The professor hastily collected his scattered manuscripts, capped his fountain pen, deposited his cigar stub in the proper receptacle, and quietly opened the door. He paused on the threshold, as if to listen, then, with stealthy dignity he tiptoed from the room, while over his erudite countenance there swiftly spread—was it possible?—a very human and extremely mischievous grin.

While these pregnant preliminaries were being arranged by Fate, Mrs. Perkins was seated on the veranda, moodily gazing at the western skyline. Had she suspected her father's absurd delusion she might have informed him that a thundercloud had temporarily obscured the sun, thereby relieving his anxiety and incidentally diverting his mind from what proved to be a very dangerous pastime.

But Mrs. Perkins's thoughts for the moment were focused upon her unamiable spouse, whose every movement in the room

overhead was subtly communicated by the slender pillar against which she leaned.

"Mildred!"

She caught the challenging call and ran at his bidding. No S. O. S. of the high seas was more sacredly heeded than were the commands of him whom she had contracted to obey.

"Do you want me, dear?" she panted, as she reached the door at the head of the stairs.

"Oh, no," growled Mr. Perkins, "I was just practicing the vocal scale. But since you are here, please take a squint at this vest."

Mrs. Perkins took a squint as directed.

"See anything wrong with it?"

"Why, there's a button missing."

"Yes, my dear, there's a button missing, just as I told you last night. I had an idea that you promised—"

"But I sewed it on this morning—that very button, too."

"Which very button?" The words snapped like a whip. Mrs. Perkins, who had never seen her husband in quite so acrimonious a mood, recoiled in dismay.

"I tell you Charles," she gasped, "I sewed a button on in that space—place I mean—where there isn't one. I can't understand—"

"Can't understand why it should fly off in a tantrum, eh?" vociferated Mr. Perkins, unaware of the aptness of his metaphor. "Well, perhaps it wasn't to blame. Some of the occult forces that your respected dad claims to control may have run amuck—that is, if the button ever was there. Did you get me, Mildred? I said 'if!'"

This diatribe, intended to wither and crush, had precisely the opposite effect, and it was now Mr Perkins's turn to gasp. Also, it might have been noted, he registered an expression singularly akin to remorse. But that came too late, for while the aspersions he had cast upon his wife's veracity might have passed unnoticed, it was what she regarded as an insulting caricature of her father that had aroused her shrinking soul to revolt. Disdaining to answer him, Mrs. Perkins had swept from the room.

In the hall she encountered the professor himself, but not for worlds would she have taken him into her confidence. To his "What is it, my dear?" she mendaciously replied, "I was just telling Charles that I have a bad headache and won't be able to join you at dinner." And in her unsuspecting heart she blessed him for the keen disappointment that overspread his benign countenance. People who prated of heartless pedants simply didn't know her father.

"Mildred complains of a sick headache," commented the professor, when he and his morose son-in-law had seated themselves at the table. "I'm afraid she is not quite herself." There was a veiled inquiry in the remark which Mr. Perkins chose to ignore.

"You also seem a little upset," continued the professor, insinuatingly. "Anything the matter?"

"The stock market," was the laconic response.

"Oh," grunted the professor, and he finished his meal in silence..

The next morning Mr. Perkins made an unusually early appearance with the intent of breakfasting alone. But to his surprise the professor had preceded him, and although their greeting was cordial, each was—or seemed to be—so absorbed in his paper that only the barest civilities were exchanged.

"Now Burton," questioned Mr. Perkins, as he consulted his watch, "have you filled my cigar case?"

"Yes, sir," replied the butler in a tone that implied, "Did you ever know *me* to fail?"

"*Ponce de Leons—Colorado*, you know."

"I have them here, sir."

"All right. Oh, by the way, Burton, order two dozen American Beauties and have them sent over at once—for Mrs. Perkins. Try to get them on the breakfast table before she comes down."

Exalted by this act of magnanimity, his amour propre re-enthroned, his whole being, in fact, suffused with the approbation of mind and conscience, Mr. Perkins waved jauntily to the professor, bestowed a benedictory smile upon Burton, as the latter assisted him into his car, and like the

Prophet Elijah (wasn't it?) departed in a cloud of glory—and Yonkers dust.

But alas! Hardly had he opened his cigar case ere a psychic revulsion set in, and by the time he arrived at his office, puffing fiercely at a *Rey de Espana, Maduro,* when that lackey had been cautioned to give him *Ponce de Leons, Colorado,* Mr. Perkins's altruistic sentiments had utterly vanished.

Now it has surely been made clear that whatever may have been Mrs. Perkins's culpability in the matter of the vest button, she certainly had no share in Burton's blunder with the cigars. Yet instead of the smile and kiss that his peace offering had led her to expect, she was dumfounded on her husband's return to receive a positive rebuff. Nor did it mollify her that the butler was the chief object of Mr. Perkins's displeasure.

"Burton!" he exploded, as the latter stepped briskly forward, "What kind of cigars did I ask for this morning?"

"*Ponce de Leons—Colorado,* sir."

"Then why the deuce did you give me something else?"

"Sir," remonstrated the butler, so formidable in his affronted pride that Mr. Perkins thought it prudent to modulate his voice. He had always harbored a secret feeling that Burton was not a man to be trifled with—now he was convinced of it.

"Why did you give me *Rey de Espanas,* Burton, and above all things, *Maduros?*" he demanded in more tempered tones.

"Excuse me, sir," said Burton with increased dignity, "I filled your case with *Ponce de Leons—Colorado.*"

"Well," hedged Mr. Perkins, beginning to doubt the testimony of his senses, "I'd swear they were *Rey de Espanas.* Hold on, here's one left in the case. Look for yourself."

Burton looked and blinked, then blinked some more; but since the only language capable of expressing his chagrin was distinctly unsuited to his environment, he discreetly remained silent. As if by magic the tables had been turned, and for the first time since he had entered Mr. Perkins's employ, Burton had found his place.

"All right, there's no great harm done," chuckled Mr. Perkins, almost restored to good humor by his transcendent victory, "but for heaven's sake try to keep your wits about you next time."

"Yes, sir," murmured the flabbergasted servant.

Again Mr. Perkins's geniality was of short duration. For scarcely had he entered his room when he perceived that the framed English prints which hung on either side of the dresser were reversed. The Hunting Scene, which belonged to the space over the radiator, had been placed next to the window, and the Tally-ho, which had acquired inalienable rights to the window space, occupied the less advantageous position. This was a display of gross carelessness that Mrs. Perkins should answer for at once, and incidentally, he craftily reflected, it would amply justify the brusque manner of his homecoming. Perhaps he had received the impression telepathically that she was scheming to annoy him. Really there might be more in the professor's theories than he imagined.

"Mildred!" he called.

"What is it?" came a voice of supreme unconcern.

"Come here."

Mrs. Perkins came, but with a defiant deliberation that recalled her mutinous conduct of the previous evening. Now or never, Mr. Perkins told himself, was the time to assert his authority. He had just triumphed over a puissant butler. Was he to be worsted by a timorous woman?

"Mildred," he began in his sternest manner, "why did you change those pictures?"

Mrs. Perkins turned her gaze upon the indicated works of art, and for an instant her inquisitor read dismay tinctured with panic in the half-averted countenance. Then suspicion, like a pall, settled upon her features, contracting them into an expression that Perkins had never seen on her face before. It was a very determined woman who now confronted him.

"I hate to disappoint you," he heard her declaim, "but as a matter of fact I haven't been in your room to-day—that is, not till this moment."

"Well, who did it—Amie?"

"Why don't you ask her?" taunted Mrs. Perkins.

"She's your servant—suppose you ask her," Mr. Perkins retorted, with feeble dignity.

"Not I!" was the appalling response.

"Wh—why not?" he stammered.

"Because I am sure she never touched them."

"Then would you mind telling me who did?" Mr. Perkins was now clearly on the defensive.

"Just apply the gentle art of elimination," suggested Mrs. Perkins. "I'm innocent, and I'm positive Amie is; Burton would as soon think of tuning the piano as of meddling with the pictures, and as for the cook, I'll wager she never set foot in this room. That leaves just Dad and yourself. Do you feel inclined to accuse Dad?"

"Of course not. Don't talk rubbish."

"Then what about yourself?"

"Heavens! Do you think I did it?" Never since the woodshed seances of his boyhood had Mr. Perkins spoken with such pathetic entreaty.

"Why Mildred, dear, you surely don't put me down for a cad?"

Mrs. Perkins shrugged her shoulders.

"But what conceivable motive could I have for doing an idiotic thing like that?" he pleaded.

"I'll answer you when you tell me why you cut off that button."

"Mildred!" There was such genuine anguish in the tone and accompanying gesture that Mrs. Perkins began to entertain a fluttering doubt as to the justice of her accusation. In the bitterness of her supposed discovery she had thrown overboard every conjugal affection and sentiment, and now that they were lost in the bottomless sea of oblivion she fain would have them back. That is, she imagined them lost. Had she been more familiar with her father's profound investigations she would have known that her "sea" was really a vast subliminal parcel room, where every memory and emotion is carefully labelled and held for redemption. How galling to the man of science must be the complacent ignorance of his own family, and yet how humiliating at times to find them arriving at his labored conclusions through some psychic back entry.

For when Mrs. Perkins's intuition told her, as it presently did, that with all her husband's shortcomings, he was innocent of the despicable trickery she had imputed to him, it also assured her that an immediate salvage might be effected before Mr. Perkins o much as suspected the all-but-tragic mutiny of her soul.

Yet caution pleaded delay, a brief period of probation o render more complete and final the happy reconciliation that should be theirs.

"Mildred!" The tone was sincere, apologetic, caressing, and when he whispered in broken accents, "Let's both forget this hideous misunderstanding," she knew that her love for him was greater than ever before. But by an almost superhuman effort she succeeded in resisting the appeal, and turned falteringly to the door.

"I must see about the dinner, Charles," she parried. "I'll—I'll join you later."

When Mrs. Perkins reached the kitchen, however, all culinary concern had apparently vanished from her mind, and after a perfunctory word with the cook and a half audible suggestion to the butler she hurried to her room, via the back stairs.

"It's wonderful, but it's too sudden," she sobbed, when she had closed her door. "True repentance takes time. I'll give the poor dear another whole hour, and then—"

And then Mrs. Perkins jumped to her feet, flung her handkerchief from her, and stared in angry stupefaction at the extraordinary disarray upon her dresser. Toilet articles had been swept to one side, a bottle of perfume upset, and in the cleared space lay an upturned jewel case, its contents scattered about in utmost disorder.

Stifling an outcry of alarm, she bounded forward, and began sorting and examining with fondling touch her desecrated treasures. The diamond brooch, the platinum watch, the emerald ring, the garnets, both opal pins, the little gold brooch, the lavalliere, the tourmaline bracelet, the jade cross, the two chains and— Why, every-

thing was there. The thief must have heard her coming, and—

"Charles!" she called. "CHARLES!"

"Yes, dear," came a hesitant, muffled voice, followed by the opening of a door, and from her wardrobe, where he had evidently sought hasty cover, the man she had absolved from all wrong-doing faltered forth, guilt and embarrassment stamped in every line of his crimson face.

And now, if you are a man, you can readily imagine the bitter anger and contempt re-born in that too-trustful heart, and the derisive scorn that burst from her lips. But if you are merely a woman you will see the crushed and abject creature so wholly at her mercy, and know, as Mrs. Perkins knew, that the ultimate reconciliation would be even more joyous and far-reaching since this tenfold need of forgiveness had so dramatically been laid bare. It was indeed a far cry from the transparent, albeit unlovable, martinet to this cringing creature of guilt, whom even now she longed to gather in her arms and comfort as she would a naughty child.

"Shall I—er—try to explain?" stammered Mr. Perkins, "or do you think you can forgive me, Millie, and let the explanation wait?"

"Charles," said Mrs. Perkins in even tones, "I can forgive you for every crime in the calendar if you remain human as you are at this moment."

"I'll make a desperate try for it," resolved Perkins, a new light in his eyes. And with that promise the reconciliation was easy indeed, and even more glorious than Mrs. Perkins had visioned.

For in thinking that the full significance of their domestic upheaval had escaped the keenly observant eye of the man who now held her clasped in his arms, little did she appreciate the perceptivity of Perkins, "relevant" or "irrelevant." Indeed, it was precisely because of her rebellion, and the unsuspected depths in her character thereby revealed, that she found her stock so suddenly enhanced in value. Unknown to her, Mr. Perkins, like most Wall Street men, had acquired intuitions of his own, and when they said "buy" he bought with enthusiasm and dispatch.

"And now, Mr. Burglar," she playfully began, drawing him to the sofa beside her, "just how many of my jewels were you going to take?"

"You certainly didn't think *that?*" demanded Perkins.

"Of course not, dear, but—but—"

"But you do think me guilty of playing those beastly practical jokes, don't you?"

Mrs. Perkins dropped her eyes and remained silent.

"Yet I swear to you that I am as innocent as you are."

Mrs. Perkins glanced appraisingly at the eager face, and again she believed him. This time, however, the belief was sealed with conviction. Never again would she entertain that base suspicion even for a fleeting moment.

"Now tell me, Mildred, what do you think I was doing here in your room?"

"I thought—Oh, Charles!—I hardly know what I thought."

"You thought I was up to some kind of devilment as a sort of retaliation for being found out in those other scrapes—wasn't that about it?"

"Yes," confessed Mrs. Perkins, her heart aflutter with a vague premonition.

"Well, dear, I don't blame you, for I must have looked rather guilty, getting caught red-handed. Now it may require a tremendous effort, but I want you to believe what I'm going to say, for it's God's truth. I was simply looking your jewels over to see what you had so as to get my bearings before selecting something else—a little present I intended as a surprise. I thought of rubies, because I see you haven't any. What do you say?"

"Charles, you—you darling! And to think— Oh, will you ever, ever forgive me?"

"Sure I will," grinned Perkins, briskly. "Didn't you forgive me just now when I looked like a double-dyed crook?"

"Do you know, I believe that darned old butler is to blame for my rotten temper," observed Mr. Perkins, when the matter of the rubies had been settled. "He and I have been sparring in the dark to settle who's boss around here, and—what's that?"

"I'm afraid it's time for you to dress for

dinner, dear," murmured Mrs. Perkins, sighing regretfully that quarrels are usually so prolonged and reconciliations so brief, "unless—"

"Unless just for once I don't change?" queried Perkins, with suppressed excitement.

"Yes, dear, you will be far more comfortable in your business suit, and really you looked quite fagged out when you came home."

"By Gad, I'll just go you for once. But won't it give old Burton a jolt?"

"And as for our two mysteries—" suggested Mrs. Perkins.

"Three," corrected Mr. Perkins, remembering his cigars.

"—let's consult Dad. He always talks so convincingly about the practical application of psychology."

When dinner was announced, however, the professor could not be found, and the lover-like couple began without him. He bustled in when the roast was being served.

"I have just consulted an optician," he explained, "and I am delighted to learn that my eyes are in excellent condition. I thought yesterday that I detected an incipient lesion, and I actually stopped work on my manuscript till I could have them examined. But I have not been altogether idle," he continued, helping himself so liberally to the gravy that his daughter had to signal Burton to interfere.

"What have you been doing?" asked Mr. Perkins, politely.

"I have been experimenting on you, Charles, and—"

"Experimenting on *me*—how?"

"Well, you see, having shown in chapter thirteen that relevant perceptivity is on the increase in direct ratio to man's intellectual development, I elaborate the deduction in chapter fourteen that irrelevant perceptivity is correspondingly on the decline. By this term, which is of my own coinage, I designate the cognition of all irrelevant objects or facts—that is, matters of no immediate concern. Your irrelevant perceptivity, I find, is barely vestigial."

Professor Torrington paused, helped himself to celery, and abruptly started to talk about miscegenation in Transylvania. Had he himself possessed the perceptivity of a kindergarten pupil he would have observed that his auditors were gazing at him in speechless amazement.

Mrs. Perkins was the first to recover. "But Dad," she interrupted, "never mind miscegenation in Transylvania—whatever that means—tell us about your experiments." She spoke hastily, noting Burton's timely absence from the room.

"To be sure," said the professor, "Well, I began yesterday by removing a button from Charles's vest. It was an extremely simple test, and a more primitive man would have detected the loss in an instant. However I strongly suspect that you two had a slight misunderstanding just before dinner, and that, of course, would militate against the effectiveness of the experiment."

Mr. Perkins coughed—a feeble cough, such as prisoners sometimes indulge in when about to be sentenced for manslaughter or grand larceny. His eyes were riveted on the professor. Mrs. Perkins's glance was fastened on a fruit stain on the table cloth.

"To-day," continued the professor serenely, "I took the trouble to transpose two pictures on your wall, a change that would have mystified a more observant man, but I'll wager that you and Mildred could bill and coo beside those pictures for a week without even seeing them, not to speak of detecting the transposition."

It was at this point that Mr. Perkins's latent sense of humor came to his rescue, and Mrs. Perkins, whose mirth had been suppressed almost at the risk of paralysis, joined hysterically in the outburst that followed.

Professor Torrington, surprised and flattered by such unwonted responsiveness, and perceiving that his experiments had been emphasized by some little comedy the details of which had escaped his notice, bethought him to recount the episode of the cigars.

In the meantime Burton had re-entered, scandalized at such boisterousness, yet plainly disappointed to have missed the joke. It may have seemed pure imagination on the part of Mr. Perkins, but the

butler's presence proved almost hypnotic in quelling their hilarity. But what was the professor saying? Waving impatiently for silence, the latter had continued: "My third experiment was conducted early this morning in this very room—"

He got no further. Grasping by an intuitive flash of perceptivity the sobering import of what was to follow, Mr. Perkins succeeded in distracting the professor's attention by introducing upon the "field" of his consciousness a brimming glass of liqueur, and thence, by a master stroke of suggestion, he re-focused it for him upon the ethnic problems of Transylvania.

Not for the price of a new runabout would he have undermined the established evidence of Burton's fallibility.

MORE STORIES *for* OCTOBER

MOTHER NECESSITY *by James Henry Thompson* introduces Miss Mary Madigan, a lady who has not missed reading a best seller since 1896 and who consequently has some well defined ideas about a sort of world that exists in imagination only. At the mercy of her every whim is one James Minsky. Jimmy toils not, neither does he spin. What he cannot steal he goes without, and what he can steal in the way of clothes enables him to dress like the composite hero, "Lord Algernon," who lives and has his being in one of the best sellers. Jimmy is a successful lover until Mary becomes unreasonable in her demands. The task she imposes as the final test of his devotion presents a problem that makes the story; and it is no exageration to say that in the making there is a touch that reminds one of O. Henry.

ZION STEPS OUT *by Earl G. Curtis* recounts the troubles which overtake the titular character, Zion Wash, and lead him to take a vacation without pay. Zion is cook on a tugboat, and he and Babe Jerry, the fireman, are rivals in love. When they attend the bazaar of the David and Daniel First Church and find their charmer being monopolized by a stranger, they forget their differences for the moment and join forces. The events of an evening leave a discouraged Babe Jerry, and the promise of further disaster is sufficient incentive for Zion to "step out."

The Black Cat Club

EIGHTY RODS NORTH

In Caribou Knowlton the author has shown us a likable chap, and the atmosphere produced makes the incidents that follow his introduction plausible. Our liking for Caribou makes us resentful of his treatment, but we soon realize we have no cause to be so. I know not whether the author intended his story to carry a deeper philosophy of life than that which appears on its surface, but to me it suggests some truths that we are prone to overlook, especially if we chance to be interested vitally.

The greatest thing that can come to us in a material sense is an incentive powerful enough to force us to the very pinnacle of the efficiency that we possess. We may think, like this lad, that we are doing our best, and our friends may credit us with being "stayers," but when this great incentive comes we attain to heights we never dreamed of—we conquer the impossible. Hate, greed, and ambition have all been powerful incentives, but love of woman has ever been the most powerful in its effect on man's endeavor.

Here, though, we have a combination of memories of the old home, admiration of a pretty face that revives previously formed ideals of womanhood, and the inherent longing of man for his mate, mistaken by young Caribou for love; and he goes forth with the great incentive to overcome all obstacles. The joy is his in the long contest, even though the love is a delusion and the object counterfeit. From the first we feel that there is no real love on either side, and while we naturally resent the treatment he receives we are glad he escapes so lightly, even before we learn that a lucky chance has saved to him his mine.

I wonder how often in real life a delusion has been to us the great incentive, has forced us to the top as nothing else could have done, only to be withdrawn by a kindly Providence before evil could result. Caribou Knowlton had achieved, and was now free to go back after one of the real girls of his ideals, and I imagine he loses no time in doing so. Let us hope he was not of that class of weak minded beings who delight to brood in bitterness and misery, and I think the author has clearly indicated to us that he was not.

I like this story of the frozen North better than most stories of its class, for it pictures something besides the brutal passions of man turned loose. —*L. H. Cobb*

THE SHRINE OF AN-LING

Petty Officer Davis is the type of man who lives in the emotions of the moment, an aimless drifter, incapable of fidelity in any form either to a woman or to the land unfortunate enough to be entitled to his allegiance.

In San Francisco he loved a girl well enough to ask her to marry him. With the homeland for behind, the mysteries and novel fascinations of a strange land have no difficulty in throwing an obscuring haze over his responsibilities. He plunges forthwith into entanglement with another woman. He is apparently quite free from any pangs of conscience until fate in the shape of the departing ship forces him to make a choice between the two.

It seems quite probable that he chooses the Chinese woman because she is his most recent love and her mark is therefore still fresh among the changing quicksands of his heart.

Whether An-Ling would have benefited more by being safe and in readiness to receive him at the old place than she did by his apparent desertion is a problem that will remain unsolved. The general impression which his character gives makes it seem quite probable that the gods conferred on her the lesser of two evils.

One can only hope that the girl who remained faithful for three years possessed enough pride to banish him resolutely from her life and begin anew when she was convinced of his defection.

It is little wonder that An-Ling learned to love the man with his ready generosities, or that she was ready to slip out of the life from which he disappeared. Both love and gratitude can spring into surprising growth within one who has been rescued from the bleak prospect of days which must be spent hovering uncertainly among tenement alleyways

With minor discrepancies, this story is of course only one of the variations played upon the theme embodied in "Madame Butterfly."

In each of these it is always the Mongol (or whatever the other race happens to be) who is endowed with the great virtues of steadfast love and unswerving fidelity. The White, aside from possessing the questionable charm to win hearts, is invariably portrayed as unprincipled and contemptible.

There may be plenty of his kind among our race; there are skeletons in every racial as well as in every family closet. But we are weary of this particular one.

—*Louise Detlefs*

THE GREEN PARROT AT RICOTTI'S

Though a favorite source of ideas, the

scientific novelty is never a simple basis for a plot. Platinized glass is no exception to the rule. The elaborate system of mirrors, pedestal, rail, closet, curtain, second door, panel and slot fail to carry conviction.

We cannot work up enthusiasm over a detective who can find out nothing without the assistance of chance. Fenger might have suspected platinized glass before it was broken for him. It is all very well for him to talk about crooks intermixing their personal affairs and their business. The mix-up which really gave him the explanation of his "too-much-cracker" clue was independent of any such thing. It started with the robbed business man running into Cibrario, and concluded with Cibrario's attempted assault on Rosa's father. The latter broke the glass, and we are not at all sure that he would not have broken it just the same if Ricotti had not stabbed Cibrario.

We have a dissatisfied feeling that the thing could not be staged. It was easy for Ricotti to abstract papers almost at his leisure from a loosely hanging coat. It was quite another matter for him to drive home his dagger, withdraw it, and get the panel closed again without detection, without any sound, without a telltale spurt or smudge of blood.

A story of this kind demands more attention to realistic detail; and a detective story requires a more inspiring hero than this nondescript, insipid, unoriginal Fenger.

When he had arrived at the conclusion that those robbed had fed the parrot, he needed only to plant a victim with a thread attached to his pocket book and he could have located Ricotti in his lair without any bloodshed. But then, as Ricotti said, Fenger was a fool. —*Michael Travers*

The chief value of this story lies in its plot mechanics. Mechanics is a good word to use in this instance, too, because the plot is really mechanical in all its aspects—not a natural flowing type. It is what one might term a "blood-sweating" plot, one that the author literally carves out of his imagination.

The whole story depends upon what suspense can be aroused and sustained by a problem that is put forward as the most important factor. One is not interested in the characters; indeed, the author has failed to create characters that are lovable or interesting even from the standpoint of sordidness.

Though the method of solving the mystery of the thefts is explained by a novel mechanical device, yet, though this device is entirely possible, it is not altogether convincing here. Then, too, the multiplicity of characters is also confusing and serves to keep interest and sympathy from becoming focused upon the principal actors.

—*Frank G. Davis*

THE GREEN PARROT AT RICOTTI'S is a really worth-while mystery story. The suspense is cleverly kept up to the last, without seeming forced as is the case in so many similar stories. Mr. Schneider errs, perhaps, in making such a minute description of the device used by Ricotti necessary. It is difficult to picture in the mind's eye such an involved scene, and a more simple device could probably have been found, or a fuller description given.

The involved hatreds of the various lovers, with their vows for vengeance, smack of the melodrama. Outside of an "East Lynne" production it is difficult to imagine anyone imprisoning a girl's father in order to force her affections. Further, it is scarcely proper for a detective to hear the bloodthirsty threats that Fenger does, without doing something to prevent the blood-shed.

—*Joseph Thalheimer, Jr.*

SPRINGS ETERNAL

SPRINGS ETERNAL is a splendid character study. The way in which the author blends the leading character with the setting is decidedly fine art. "When the eaves of the verandas began to sag Steffin Gath began to bend and sag too." This is an excellent example of tying the animate to the inanimate, so effective in a story based on character and environment.

The introduction is long but not tiresome, for the writer has skillfully woven the motif in with the character, description and local color, and the crisis could only begin with the end of the introduction, for this is not an action story.

In fact the "action hounds" should steer clear of SPRINGS ETERNAL for the crisis holds no movie thrills, nor the climax any surprise. There is only intense interest at the crisis where the real-estate man, an excellently drawn character, by the way, induces the aged hotel keeper to sell his broken down property. As for the climax: there is no surprise about it. Had the author intended one he would not have chosen the title he did. He had a limited choice of climaxes: death, insanity, or the renewal of the dried-up sulphur spring—so he chose all three. And the reader experiences no disappointment; only the sadness of what "might have been."

It is art with a big A to produce a story without distinct surprise, without much action, and with little complication of plot and still maintain suspense as does this story.

O. Henry or De Maupassant might have drawn the character and setting with swifter strokes; yet, even with its slight excess

of verbiage, SPRINGS ETERNAL stands out clean-cut and with a clear, harmonious, melancholy tone.

In my role of critic it wouldn't do to let the story off scot-free, so I'll admit the plot is not a new one. Rapidly changing my role back to reader I'll have to admit that I liked the story thoroughly nevertheless. —*Robert N. Stannard*

Human character, well portrayed, furnishes the bulk as well as the most interesting portion of our reading matter.

Next to the human interest comes the history, or rather, the life story of buildings. Probably it is largely because of their close contact with persons that we find in them vital interest.

In SPRINGS ETERNAL the Gath Hotel makes the same appeal to the sympthies that a derelict person makes. Indeed the hotel is more appealing in its personality—if one may use such a term in description of a building—than is its owner.

One feels a bit out of patience that any man, particularly one who had created and run such a place as Gath Hotel, and still possessed power of thought and locomotion, could so shut himself away from the world, and vegetate.

To be sure the character is true to life, for there are plenty of men who, as they grow older, continue to live in their past accomplishments; to them the present is non-existent.

A. J. Heisman is the type of man who will acquire property, guide city policies and lead in politics. He may not possess fine sensibilities but to such as he come wealth and power.

A sentimental dreamer like Gath might build a hotel, but he was a man of one thought and incapable of change, either in his thoughts or business methods.

Heisman lived in the present with a practical grasp of future possibilities.

As a whole the story is a good character study and the reader feels that neither owner nor building could exist apart, so that the end of Mr. Gath is a fitting one.

—*Augusta Tuttle*

PAINTED MARY

Mere man is often confronted with the unanswerable question: Why will a thoroughly nice girl daub herself with paint until she looks like an artist's apron, or cover her face with powder until it is impossible to tell whether she has just been inspecting a flour mill or is trying to imitate a clown in make-up; when she has a skin that is much nicer looking than anything she can put on it.

The delightful sermon is so timely that one is inclined to give it more thought than anything else and pray that others, like Mary, will look into the glass and be convinced.

One of the finest things about the story is the idea of the dictated letter to cover a lecture. It placed Mary in a position where she could get as angry as she liked, but had to listen just the same. The fact that she took the advice is not surprising, but forgiving the adviser stamps her as a really remarkable young lady. —*Mrs. E. J. Stroud*

This story is all moral, first, last and middle. It is so well written the men will read it and nod yes, yes, and the girls will smile and pass on. Like many masculine theories, this one sounds plausible and has a grain of truth, but the rest is imagination. If this author's ideas about the downward path were real, nearly every other girl in our Chicago "loop" would be down in a heap, elbowing for room, while some clean-washed and powderless ones would have plenty of space. Would Mr. Disleigh hire a stenographer with a shiny nose? He would not. Let the men who hasten to approve of this story in regard to moral rather than plot take note of the women of forty and fifty who lead active business lives with the aid of "paint and powder," whereas they might otherwise be old and wrinkled and back in the woods.

—*Bessie Loesges*

THE LOCOMOTIVE WITH THE EVIL EYE

Though credulity is sometimes strained almost to the breaking point by the constant shifting of engine forty-thirty-seven from one scene to another to force necessary situations as the author's needs arise, yet it is made a fairly convincing piece of fiction by employing the inborn superstition of a Mexican in connection with a few more or less logical coincidences to complete a natural illusion. Whether one cares to acknowledge it or not, there is a certain element in all of us, which, if it cannot be called superstition, is certainly akin to it, and this instinct helps to arouse interest in this particular type of story, even though one is clearly justified in criticising the too free use of superstition.

—*Frank G. Davis*

Editor's note: Do not try to criticise every story in this number. Put your energy into one sane, carefully written criticism. Make it a finished essay, not merely a synopsis, and do not write more than five hundred words. Write on one side of the paper only. The number of words in the criticism should be written at the top of the first sheet, together with the name and address of the author. Criticisms of stories in this number should be mailed to the BLACK CAT not later than October 10.

The "OPEN DOOR" For WRITERS

The very authors whose stories are most in demand by magazine editors to-day started their careers by writing stories for the BLACK CAT. Among them are Jack London, Rupert Hughes, Alice Hegan Rice, Harry Stilwell Edwards, Will N. Harben, Geraldine Bonner, Sewell Ford, Holman Day, Cleveland Moffett, Juliet Wilbor Thompkins, Ellis Parker Butler, Susan Glaspell, and to mention some of the more recent arrivals among the top-notchers, James Francis Dwyer, Ida M. Evans, Hapsburg Liebe, William Hamilton Osborne, William J. Neidig and Octavus Roy Cohen.

There are new writers coming forward every day, and the BLACK CAT believes in being near the source of supply, in being almost *the* source of supply. It is always ready to publish the work of those who show promise, bases its judgment on merit alone, and gives the same consideration to the new writer that is given to the writer with an established reputation.

There is no better way to learn to write than by analyzing the work of other writers. Thus, it was to help the aspiring writer to a quicker understanding of short-story principles that the BLACK CAT CLUB was formed and made a regular feature of the magazine. The idea of the CLUB is simple: It offers the writer an opportunity to master technique by study and criticism of BLACK CAT stories. These criticisms are the writer's "finger exercises." Each month the best critical essays are published with the names of the authors, *and paid for at the rate of one cent per word.* Membership is open to all who subscribe to the magazine. Several members have had stories published in the BLACK CAT and other magazines since joining the CLUB. By studying stories that *have sold* you may learn to write stories that *will sell.*

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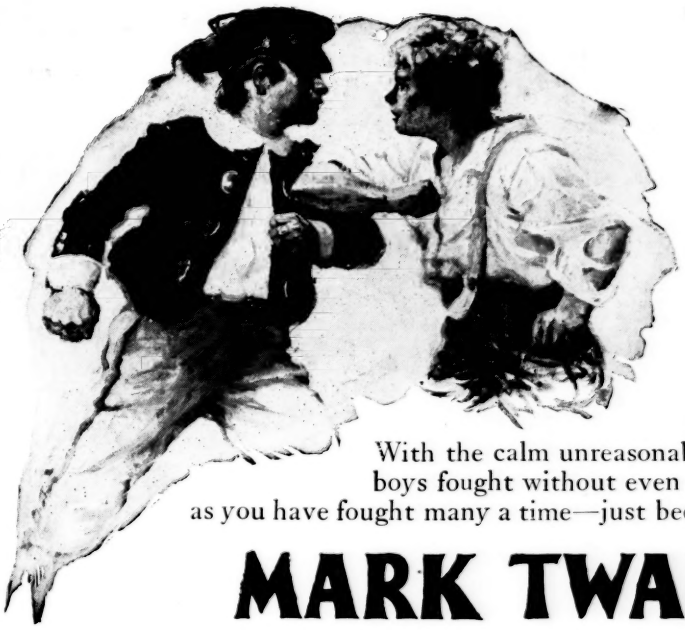

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Send me all charges prepaid, a set of Mark Twain's works in twenty-five volumes, illustrated, bound in handsome green cloth, stamped in gold, with trimmed edges. If not satisfactory I will return them at your expense. Otherwise I will send you $2.00 within five days and $2.00 a month for 15 months. For cash, deduct 8% from remittance. Black Cat

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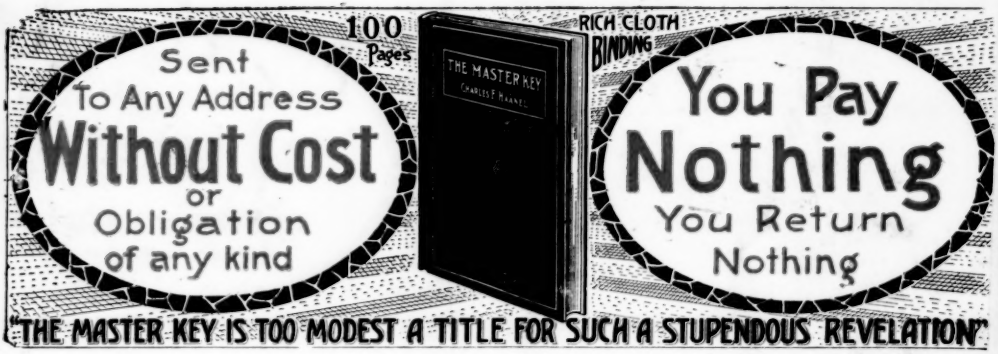
For our beautiful red half-leather edition, change above terms to $1.50 within 5 days and $4.00 a mo. for 12 mos.



SOME men and women seem to attract success, power, wealth, health and attainment with very little effort; others conquer with great difficulty, still others fail altogether to reach their ambitions, desires and ideals. Why is this so?

"The Master Key" will tell you why. No one can read it and not be a changed man or woman. None but who will emerge from its magic pages with a firmer grasp of the future---a surer understanding of what he can do.

"The Master Key" is a key with which men are converting loss into gain, fear into courage, despair into joy, hope into fruition.

A MASTER-KEY will be sent to you, without cost or obligation of any kind, if you address

Charles F. Haanel, 429 Granite Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

This Advertisement *contains a message of such transcendental importance that every reader of The Black Cat, whether man, woman, or child, should answer it immediately*

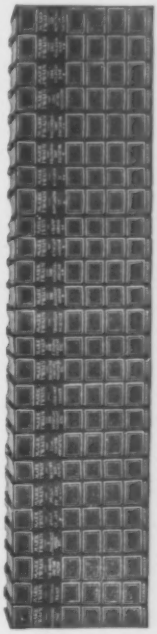
"Hey, Tom!"

Do you remember when Tom Sawyer went swimming and had everything hidden so carefully that Aunt Polly couldn't find out?—

Aunt Polly had sewed up his shirt that morning—

But Tom had carefully resewed it, so he thought he was safe. But alack and alas! he used black thread instead of white!

Once more you will laugh with Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn—but you will want to cry as you laugh. For behind the joy of youth is the reality of life—the philosophy you did not see when you were a boy.



MARK TWAIN

25 Volumes: NOVELS—BOYS' STORIES—HUMOR ESSAYS—TRAVEL—HISTORY

While he lived we loved him. He made us laugh, so that we had not time to see that his style was sublime, that he was biblical in simplicity, that he was to America another Lincoln in spirit.

We watched for his great white head in the crowds—we hung on his every word—we smiled, ready to laugh at his least word. But now he is gone we love him—yes—he's the familiar friend—but he has joined the immortals. More than Whitman—than Longfellow—than Poe or Hawthorne or Irving—he stands for America—with the great of the earth—the Homer of this land—a prince of men—a king among dreamers—a child among children.

The Great American

He was American. He had the idealism of America—the humor, the kindliness, the reaching toward a bigger thing, the simplicity. In this work we find things, from the ridiculous of "Huckleberry Finn" to the sublime of "Joan of Arc"—the most spiritual book that was ever written in the English language, of serene and lovely beauty, as lofty as Joan herself. A man who could write two such books as "Huckleberry Finn" and "Joan of Arc" was sublime in power. His youth and his laughter are eternal; his genius will never die.

Low Price Sale Must Stop

Mark Twain wanted every one in America to own a set of his books. So one of the last things he asked was that we make a set at so low a price that every one might own one. He said: "Don't make fine editions. Don't make editions to sell for $200 and $300 and $1000. Make good books, books good to look at and easy to read and make their price low." So we have made this set. And up to now we have been able to sell it at this low price.

Rising costs make it impossible to continue this sale of Mark Twain at a low price. New editions will cost very much more than this Author's National Edition. A few months ago we had to raise the price a little. That raise in price was a very small one. It does not matter much if you missed it. But now the price must go up again. You must act at once. You must sign and mail the coupon now. If you want a set at a popular price, do not delay. This edition will soon be withdrawn and then you will pay considerably more for your Mark Twain.

Send Coupon—No Money—To-day

Remember, never again will a set of Mark Twain be offered at such a price as this. When this edition is gone there will be no more at this price.

Send the coupon herewith at once.

HARPER & BROTHERS, Franklin Sq., N. Y.

HARPER & BROTHERS
97 Franklin Sq., N. Y

Send me, all charges prepaid, a set of Mark Twain's works in twenty-five volumes, illustrated, bound in handsome green cloth, stamped in gold, and trimmed edges. If not satisfactory, I will return them at your expense. Otherwise I will send you $2.00 within five days and $2.00 a month for 15 months. For cash deduct 8% from remittance.

Black Cat

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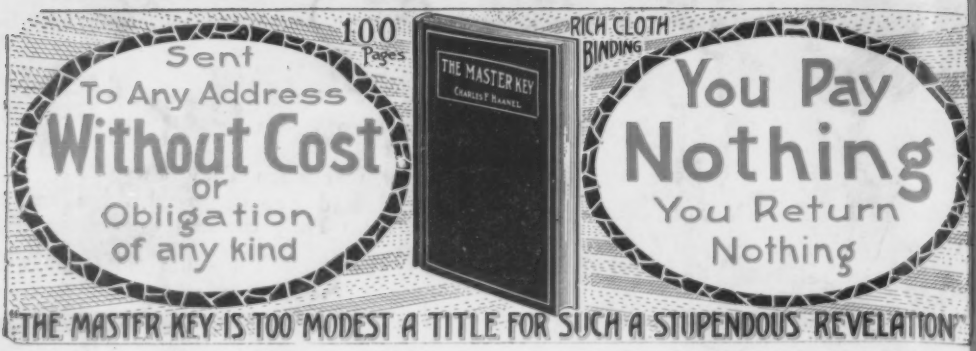

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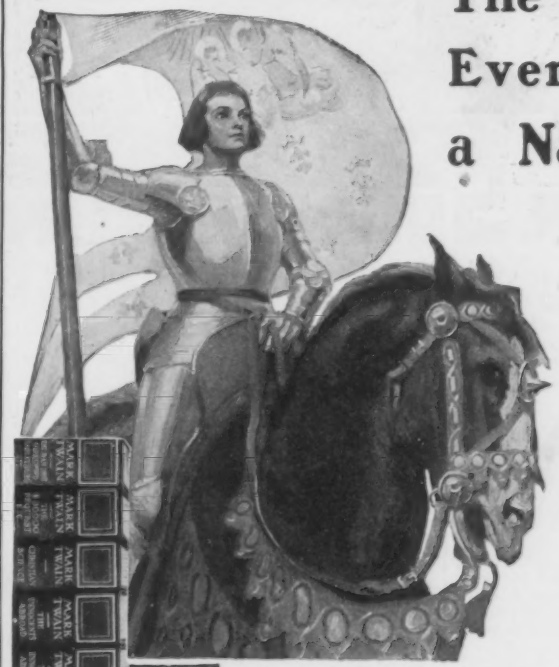
The Only Girl Who Ever Commanded a Nation's Armies

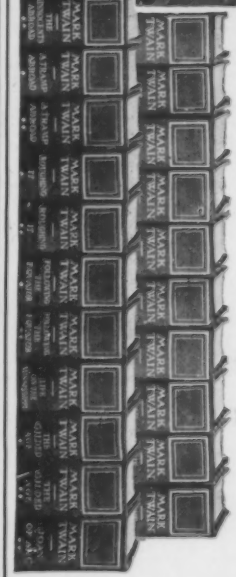


A simple little girl of sixteen played one day in a little lost village. The next year, in supreme command of all the troops of France, she led them in triumph to victory.

Great dukes bowed before this girl who could not read. Sinful men, men who had cursed and drank and murdered all their days, followed her meekly.

It is the most dramatic, the most amazing story in the whole story of human life. In the dim far-off past, Joan of Arc went her shining way in France—and her story was never told as it should have been till it was told by an American.

MARK TWAIN



To us whose chuckles had turned to tears over the pathos of "Huckleberry Finn"—to us who felt the cutting edge of "Innocents Abroad"—the coming of Joan of Arc from the pen of Mark Twain was no surprise.

The story began as an anonymous romance in Harper's Magazine, but within a few months the secret was out. Who but Mark Twain could have written it? Who could have written this book that has almost the simplicity, the loftiness of the Bible—but with a whimsical touch which makes it human. Mark Twain's Joan of Arc is no cold statue in a church—no bronze on a pedestal, but a warm, human, loving girl.

Read "Joan of Arc" if you would read the most sublime thing that has come from the pen of any American. Read "Joan of Arc" if you would know Mark Twain in all his greatness. It is accurate history told in warm story form.

The Price Goes Up

25 VOLUMES

Novels Stories Humor
Essays Travels History

This is Mark Twain's own set. This is the set he wanted in the home of each of those who love him. Because he asked it, Harpers have worked to make a perfect set at a reduced price.

Before the war we had a contract price for paper, so we could sell this set of Mark Twain at a reduced price. The last of the edition is in sight. The price of paper has gone up.

The Great American

Born poor—growing up in a shabby little town on the Mississippi—a pilot—a seeker for gold—a printer—Mark Twain was molded on the frontier of America.

The vastness of the West—the fearlessness of the pioneer—the clear philosophy of the country boy were his—and they stayed with him in all simplicity to the last day of those glorious later days—when German Emperor and English King—Chinese Mandarin and plain American, all alike, wept for him.

Send Coupon Without Money

There never again will be any more Mark Twain at the present price. Get the 25 volumes now, while you can.

Every American has got to have a set of Mark Twain in his home. Get this now and save money.

Your children want Mark Twain. You want him. Send this coupon today — now — while you are looking at it.

Black Cat

HARPER & BROTHERS
Franklin Sq., N.Y.

Send me, all charges prepaid, a set of Mark Twain's works in 25 volumes, illustrated, bound in handsome green cloth, stamped in gold, gold tops and untrimmed edges. If not satisfactory, I will return them at your expense. Otherwise I will send you $1.00 within 5 days and $2.00 a month for 12 months, thus getting the benefit of your half-price sale.

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Our soldier boys love to sing, and they should have all the newest **"Song Hits"** as fast as they come out. We make it easy for you to make a selection from all the latest and most popular songs and buy at the lowest prices, direct by mail, postpaid. Look over the list below. Send one, or better still, ALL of these to your brave soldier. Make him happy. Nothing you can send him will be more appreciated than these popular favorites. Keep him singing. Order by number.

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A 7 Blackhawk, You're a Grand Old Chief.....T. D. Harrigan
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A 11 Boys of the Grand Old U. S. A....R. Creswell
A 10 Sweet Land of Liberty.....Mrs. Ida Hodlmair
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A 16 Hurrah! For Our Sammies....Susie J. N. Brock
A 24 The Brave Boys of the U. S. A.....F. J. Boyer
A 26 The Soldier's Farewell to Mother..Carl Peterson
A 25 Leaving the Old Home....Miss Willie Anderson
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A 61 Our Flag, The Red, White and Blue.....Wm. T. LaForest
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A 63 When We Get There.....Fred H. Eckfeld
A 67 America's Final Stand.....O. A. Haas
A 70 The Canadian Volunteer..Pte. E. A. Nurnberger
A 71 Don't Harm the Flag That Protects You..M. Vivian Lawrence
A 72 Old Glory.....Mrs. Bessie Eli Roberts
A 73 When We Go to Conquer Germany.....Mrs. John Jersey
A 74 When We Pull Off Our Last Big Stunt.....M. E. Shartle
A 75 Tell Me, Will My Dream Come True?.....Miss E. S. Smith
A 77 When the Lilacs Are in Bloom..Eliza A. Mitchell
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A 66 Brave Boys Somewhere in France.....Mrs. Connie Whitford
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A 8 My Ohio Girl .....M. Lehman
A 12 To Lose You Leaves a Sorrow That My Heart Would Ne'er Bear....Mrs. Wm. E. Ott
A 13 The Hunter's Moon.....Louis Schlueter
A 15 The Song of a Broken Heart..Rosamond Van Ek
A 18 If I Were a Rose.....E. Flora Murray
A 21 Now, Sweetheart, Do Not Cry.....Mrs. Annetta Young
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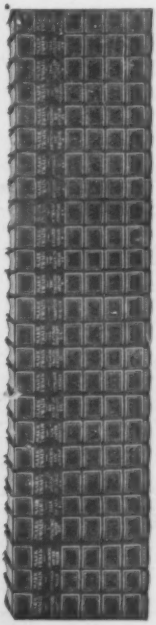
"I *ain't* afraid."
"You are."
"I ain't."
"You are."

What would have happened next if you were a boy? A frightful mix-up. With the calm unreasonableness of youth these two boys fought without even knowing each other—just as you have fought many a time—just because you couldn't help it.

MARK TWAIN

No wonder our soldiers and sailors like Mark Twain best. No wonder the boys at Annapolis told Secretary Daniels that they would rather have Mark Twain than any one else. To them, as to you, Mark Twain is the spirit of undying youth—the spirit of real Americanism—for he who came out of that loafing, out-at-elbows, down-at-the-heels Mississippi town, he has passed on to the world the glory of our inspiring Americanism—the serious purpose that underlies our laughter—for to Mark Twain humor is only incidental, and he has made eternal the springs of its youth and enthusiasm.

Take Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer by the hand and go back to your own boyhood.



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The last of the edition is in sight. There will never again be a set of Mark Twain at the present price. Now is your opportunity to save money. Now is the time to send the coupon to get your Mark Twain.

Harper & Brothers
EST. 1817
Franklin Square, New York

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YOU can learn to write Short Stories, Photoplays, Magazine and Newspaper articles in your own home. Those day dreams of yours may mean a future to you. If you have the ideas for stories—we can teach you how to write, for writing is not a "gift from Heaven." The ability to write is acquired—just like any other ability. *You* can acquire the ability through Hoosier Institute training, *right in your own home during spare time.* You are shown how the world's greatest story writers worked out their plots and developed fascinating stories out of incidents and happenings most people would consider commonplace. You receive personal instruction. Your stories are carefully edited. Under the terms of our special introductory offer now being made your success is assured. Send the coupon today for full information.

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is an ordinary income for a writer. $150 to $200 is a very ordinary price for scores of fiction magazines to pay unknown writers for single stories of two or three thousand words. The Saturday Evening Post rarely pays less than $300 for a short story and will pay any amount necessary to get stories it wants. Cash in on this opportunity.

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Here is Jack London's message to every ambitious writer: "I like your *simple, direct, straight-from-the shoulder method* of presenting the matter. As somewhat of a veteran in the short story game I feel justified in giving my judgment that your course in short story writing is excellently comprehensive and practical." And this course of training that Jack London endorsed is yours on a great special offer. Write for details.

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We have prepared a booklet entitled "How to Write," that contains vital information for the man or woman who is ambitious to become a short story writer. It will be sent to you FREE if you send the coupon. Your request for the FREE BOOK places you under no obligations. Just put your name and address in the coupon and mail it to us NOW.

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Your request for the FREE BOOK will also bring you full details of our great course and the Special Introductory Offer that is being made for a *limited time.* Do not overlook this opportunity. Send coupon today without fail.

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One in Four of Our Men Called for Draft Examination Was Physically Deficient

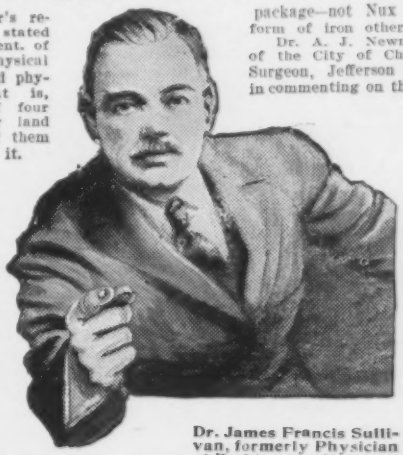
CITY PHYSICIAN STRONGLY ADVISES ALL PERSONS TO HAVE BLOOD EXAMINATIONS MADE BY FAMILY DOCTOR SAYS THOUSANDS SUFFER FROM IRON DEFICIENCY

And think it's "overwork," "too much worry," "a case of nerves,' or some other trouble. Ordinary Nuxated Iron will increase the strengh and endurance of such folks in two weeks' time in many instances.

In General Crowder's report to Congress, he stated that twenty-nine per cent. of the men called for physical examination were found physically deficient: that is, more than one out of four of the flower of our land was sick and many of them perhaps did not know it.

In commenting on this serious condition of affairs, Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly Physician of Bellevue Hospital, (Outdoor Dep.) New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, said: "The probability is that many of these cases were due solely to lack of sufficient iron in the red blood corpuscles. When the iron goes from the blood, you can have most any kind of symptoms varying from a weak, nervous, run-down state, to those of most serious maladies: the volume of blood often increases, thereby imposing an extra heavy burden on the heart. Contrary to general opinon, lack of iron in the blood does not necessarily mean you do not have enough blood, but it means your blood is not of the right kind.

If you feel tired in the mornings; restless at night; if you suffer from weakness or lack of vitality; go to your family doctor and have him take a specimen of your blood and examine it, and if it shows iron deficiency, get him to give you a prescription for organic iron—Nuxated Iron. Do this so as to be sure that you do not get hold of some of the numerous forms of metallic iron preparations on the market which may do you far more harm than good. Or if you do not want to go to this trouble, purchase an original package of Nuxated Iron and see for yourself that the words Nuxated Iron appear on the package—not Nux and Iron nor any other form of iron other than Nuxated Iron.



Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly Physician of Bellevue Hospital, (Outdoor Dept.) New York and the Westchester County Hospital.

DR. SULLIVAN SAYS

One fourth of the people are sick—not up to the normal health mark as shown by General Crowder's reports to Congress on the draft examination. I strongly advise everyone who feels weak, nervous or run-down at times, to go to their family physician and have a blood examination made. Thousands suffer from iron deficiency and do not know it. In my opinion there is nothing like organic iron—Nuxated Iron—to help give increased strength and energy to the weak, run-down and aged.

Dr. A. J. Newman, late Police Surgeon of the City of Chicago and former House Surgeon, Jefferson Park Hospital, Chicago, in commenting on the value of Nuxated Iron, said: "This remedy has proven through my own tests of it to excel any remedy I have ever used for creating red blood, bulding up the nerves, strengthening the muscles and correcting digestive disorders. The manufacturers are to be congratulaed in having given to the public a long felt want, a true tonic, suppyling iron in an easily digested and assimilated form. A true health builder in every sense of the word."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, formerly Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hopsital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

MANUFACTURERS NOTE:—Nuxated Iron which is used by Dr. Sullivan and others with such surprising results, and which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to everd purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensey by all good druggists.

How To Become An Author

By J. Horace Lytle

Author of The Story of Jack, Letters That Land Orders, Sandy's Golf Dog, and Numerous Other Stories, Feature Articles and Books.

Nearly every one, I think, has either a secret or an open ambition to write. I say this because my own very modest success thus far has brought to me an untold number of people who seek suggestion and advice—people whom one would never know had such an ambition. Many of these persons, I have found, have had latent ability.

I shall never forget the first check I ever received for an accepted manuscript. This article appeared in the July 1909 issue of Advertisers Magazine, which at that time was pulblished at Kansas City, Mo.

When I had written this article, I mailed it at once to Advertisers Magazine. After it had gone, I wondered how soon it would come back to me—though I hoped that if they took it they would be sure to put my name at the head of it.

Imagine my surprise and joy when I received a letter from the Editor saying that the manuscript was very acceptable and asking how much I wanted for it!

I debated two days before I replied. I hated to tell him that he might have it for nothing after the way he had written. Yet I was afraid of spoiling the deal. My wife suggested that I ask him $5 for it. But that seemed too much!

So I told the Editor to make his own price and just send me whatever he cared for my article. The next week I received a check for $7.50! It's an honest fact—that's what he sent me.

I don't think I cashed that check for a year. I remember that I even considered some of having it framed. But, oh, what a difference just a few years make!

Since then I have been paid as high as $250 for a single story. Some authors, of course, get more than twice that much—but I have yet to arrive that far. I have, however received as high as $75 each for special feature articles and editorials, while at least two of my books have sold a good many thousands of copies, on splendid royalties.

TRAINING IN WRITING

But you can't get along without training for authorship. Some get this one way and some another—but, for my part, the surest and quickest, and in the long run the cheapest, training can come best only by following a prescribed course of instruction augmented by the constant suggestions and criticisms of a competent critic.

Because there are many things that you must know. To try to buck them and get along without it is ridiculous. For one thing, STYLES CHANGE IN STORIES JUST AS IN HATS OR SHOES. If you don't know what these styles are, you can't write successfully—and by successfully I mean PROFITABLY—for the modern magazines.

And here's another thing you'd better believe if you ever hope for real money: when you are paid for your work, you will do better work—you will write better. It's all very well GAMELY to grind out manuscripts, and send them around to the Editors. But when you know that the thing you are writing is GOING TO BE BOUGHT AND PUBLISHED—then you will write better, because you can and will take more pains. You will have more time for each piece of work and more confidence as you do it.

For, whether you be an idealist of the profession, or just a coldly practical journalist for profit, you may take it from me that it is quality of effort and production that pays the best—and not quantity.

But any man, woman or child who has, or ever expects to have, even the remotest suggestion of a desire to write, and who wants to take the advice of one who can at least say with modesty that he has been through the mill will sign, clip and mail this coupon *now.*

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Please mail me without cost or obligation your book describing your course of instruction in Short Story, Photoplay and general magazine writing. Also include a free copy of Mr. Lytle's complete article entitled "How to Become an Author." None of this to place me under any obligation to you.

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Address _____

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The One By Which All Others Are Governed

—FOUR MONTHS FOR A DOLLAR—

Makes a Sensible Holiday Gift

GIFT subscriptions to THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD begin with the January Number. Because of the largely increased cost of production and the necessity of going to press at the earliest possible time, your gift subscription should be received at once.

THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD, as this issue alone testifies, is the handsomest magazine of its class in America today. This special offer of four issues for One Dollar is made for the purpose of introducing it where it will be appreciated immediately.

Clean, wholesome, entertaining, well written and edited, THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD is "going over the top" with greater avidity each month. This issue is our best effort so far—next month's will eclipse this number, and each succeeding copy will convince the recipient of your Holiday gift of your excellent judgment in selecting THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD.

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EVERY issue is published with the idea of editorial quality uppermost in our minds. No expense is spared in giving the readers of THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD the best up-to-the-minute articles procurable.

EVERY feature of every number is exclusive —all specially written and prepared for THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD'S big family of cinema fans.

WE need not dwell upon the excellence of its contents — this handsome Holiday number requires but a slight examination to convince you of its supremacy in the field of motion picture periodicals.

Because of the quality of THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD, it has become necessary for the publishers to increase the price to 35c a copy; $3.50 a year.

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A gift card, bearing the donor's name, will be sent to any address. Write plainly when filling out the attached coupon.

The Downs Publishing Co.
Bulletin Building Philadelphia

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The Photo-Play World, Philadelphia, Pa

Enter my subscription to THE PHOTO-PLAY WORLD for four months, beginning with January issue.

I enclose herewith one dollar.

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There is a Master Key

The Lowe Observatory
Edgar Lucien Larkin, Director
Los Angeles, Calif., Dec. 6, 1916.
Mr. C. F. Haanel, St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
Your booklet, "Master-Key," ought to be expanded into a book. Its teachings that Mind is the all-dominating creative force is precisely in line with the wonders of the most recent psychology. All persons having desks should have this pamphlet thereon. And it would be a fitting pocket companion.
EDGAR LUCIEN LARKIN,
Author of the Matchless Altar of the Soul

First Nautilus Center
160 Claremont Ave., New York
New York, Nov. 18, 1916.
I have made a thorough examination of the little booklet which you so appreciatively have called the "Master-Key," and can unhesitatingly endorse it and its teachings.
In this pamphlet of only a few pages you have led a hungry world to the threshold and placed in their hands a "key" with which the understanding ones may unlock the door and enter "The Secret Places of the Most High," and enjoy the abundance of all good to be found therein. With best wishes,
AGNES MAE GLASGOW, M. D.

THE MASTER MIND
Annie Rix Militz, Editor
Los Angeles, Calif.
The "Master-Key" is an excellent booklet of strong, scientific reaching of the allness of mind, not lacking in Spirituality, yet especially appealing to the intellect desiring logical proof of Truth.

Home Life Insurance Company of New York,
James Lee Bost, General Agent
Washington, D. C., Dec. 29, 1916.
Mr. CHAS. F. HAANEL,
St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
Your little booklet, entitled "The Master-Key," has been received and I had great pleasure in studying it carefully. It is very clear and concise, yet forceful presentation of the big subject handled, and shows a very wide study of the absolute teachings and deep understanding of the same. Very truly yours,
JAMES LEE BOST.

The Weltmer Institute of Suggestive Therapeutics
Nevada, Mo., Dec. 17, 1916.
CHAS. F. HAANEL, St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
"The Master-Key" gives a most scientific, direct and comprehensive presentation of the constructive power of thought.
Your most sincere friend,
SIDNEY A. WELTMER, Pres.

Which can unlock the Secret Chamber of Success, can throw wide the doors which seem to bar men from the Treasure House of Nature, and bids those enter and partake who are Wise enough to Understand and broad enough to Weigh the Evidence, firm enough to Follow Their Own Judgment and strong enough to Make the Sacrifice Exacted.

The International New Thought Alliance, General Headquarters
Washington, D. C., Nov. 14, 1916.
CHAS. F. HAANEL., St. Louis, Mo.
My Dear Mr. Haanel:
I have read your little booklet, "The Master-Key," carefully, and think it very good indeed. I am enclosing stamps for a few more copies, which I wish to give to those whom I know to need just the dynamic message which your book contains. Yours sincerely,
GRACE WILSON, Sec.

Unity School of Christianity
Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 14, 1916.
Dear Mr. Haanel:
Your little book, entitled "Master-Key," is a very practical presentation of the power of mind in its various fields of action. It conveys to one the conviction that Mind is All Powerful and All Present.
Faithfully,
CHARLES FILLMORE, Pres.

The Day Star Publishing Co.
Topeka, Kansas, Feb. 15, 1917.
"The Master-Key" is the answer to the demand "knock and it shall be opened," and truly it will open the "Gate Beautiful" leading into every "temple of the living God." All the world seek this marvelous key. Oh ye who sit in darkness "Knock"—use this "Master-Key" and the door shall be opened unto you, revealing to your eyes of flesh, peace, power and plenty.
LIDA HALLIE HARDY, Pres.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 21, 1916.
I have just received and read your booklet called "The Master-Key." It is exceedingly thoughtful and in many ways masterful. I thank you for the privilege of reading it and will file it away with my strong presentations of the philosophy of life. I am truly yours,
GRANVILLE LOWTHER.

FREE! There is no charge for the Master Key. It is FREE

Charles F. Haanel,
429 Granite Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.
Send me a copy of the Master-Key FREE!
Name.....
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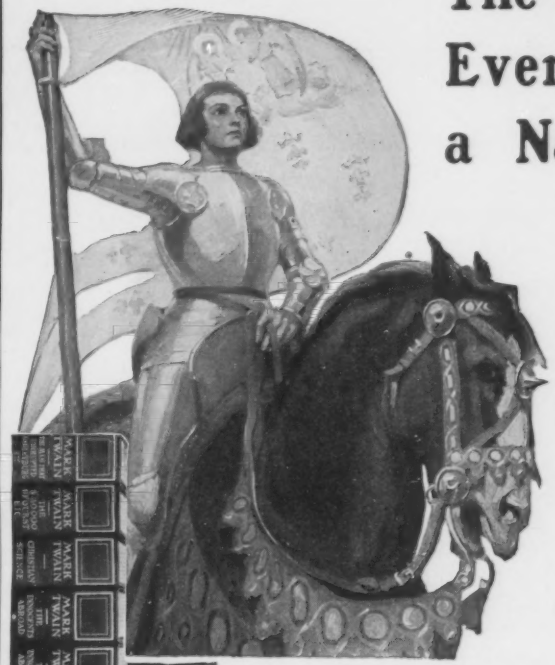
NOTE—There is a Master Key for every reader of The Black Cat. Be sure you get yours!

The Only Girl Who Ever Commanded a Nation's Armies

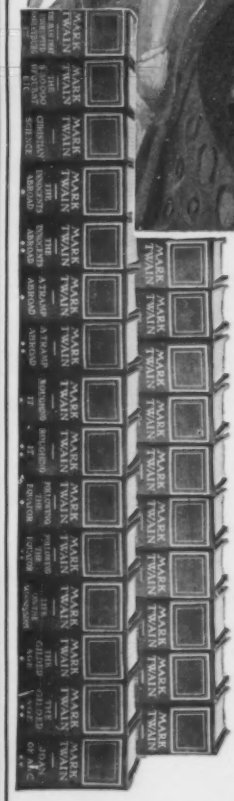


A simple little girl of sixteen played one day in a little lost village. The next year, in supreme command of all the troops of France, she led them in triumph to victory.

Great dukes bowed before this girl who could not read. Sinful men, men who had cursed and drank and murdered all their days, followed her meekly.

It is the most dramatic, the most amazing story in the whole story of human life. In the dim far-off past, Joan of Arc went her shining way in France—and her story was never told as it should have been till it was told by an American.

MARK TWAIN



To us whose chuckles had turned to tears over the pathos of "Huckleberry Finn"—to us who felt the cutting edge of "Innocents Abroad"—th coming of Joan of Arc from the pen of Mark Twain was no surprise.

The story began as an anonymous romance in Harper's Magazine, but within a few months the secret was out. Who but Mark Twain could have written it? Who could have written this book that has almost the simplicity, the loftiness of the Bible—but with a whimsical touch which makes it human. Mark Twain's Joan of Arc is no cold statue in a church—no bronze on a pedestal, but a warm, human, loving girl.

Read "Joan of Arc" if you would read the most sublime thing that has come from the pen of any American. Read "Joan of Arc" if you would know Mark Twain in all his greatness. It is accurate history told in warm story form.

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There never again will be any more Mark Twain at the present price. Get the 25 volumes now, while you can.

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Black Cat

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Send me, all charges prepaid, a set of Mark Twain's works in 25 volumes, illustrated, bound in handsome green cloth, stamped in gold, gold tops and untrimmed edges. If not satisfactory, I will return them at your expense. Otherwise I will send you $1.00 within 5 days and $2.00 a month for 12 months, thus getting the benefit of your half-price sale.

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one of America's well-known musicians is our leading composer. One of his greatest successes "MEET ME TONIGHT IN DREAMLAND," reached the enormous total of over 2,000,000 copies. Over 1,000,000 copies of his song, "LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART," were sold, while the sale of his famous "WHEN I DREAMED OF OLD ERIN" passed the 9,000,000 mark.

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is being offered for the best songs of America in war. Some one is going to win these cash prizes, why not you? Contest closes January 1st, 1919, which gives you time to submit several poems One, or more, may make your name famous all over the world. Our boys love to sing, and they will perhaps be singing your song "over there" in the battle lines, while those they love will be singing it "over here." Why not try? Write at once for details. Use the coupon for convenience.

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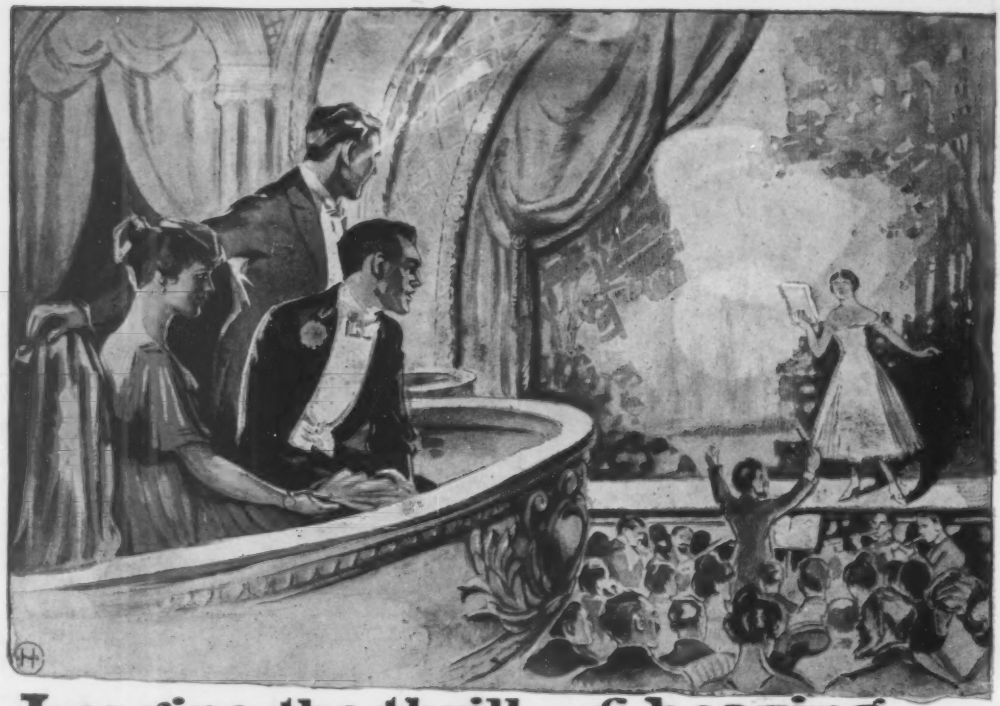

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The Secret of Being a Convincing Talker

How I Learned It in One Evening

By GEORGE RAYMOND

"HAVE you heard the news about Frank Jordan?"

This question quickly brought me to the little group which had gathered in the center of the office. Jordan and I had started with the Great Eastern Machinery Co., within a month of each other, four years ago. A year ago Jordan was taken into the accounting division and I was sent out as salesman. Neither of us was blessed with an unusual degree of brilliancy, but we "got by" in our new jobs well enough to hold them.

Imagine my amazement, then, when I heard:

"Jordan's just been made Treasurer of the Company!"

I could hardly believe my ears. But there was the "Notice to Employees" on the bulletin board, telling about Jordan's good fortune.

Now I knew that Jordan was a capable fellow, quiet, and unassuming, but I never would have picked him for any such sudden rise. I knew too that the Treasurer of the Great Eastern had to be a big man, and I wondered how in the world Jordan landed the place.

The first chance I got, I walked into Jordan's new office, and after congratulating him warmly, I asked him to let me "in" on the details of how he jumped ahead so quickly. His story is so intensely interesting that I am going to repeat it as closely as I remember:

"I'll tell you just how it happened, George, because you may pick up a pointer or two that will help *you*.

"You remember how scared I used to be whenever I had to talk to the chief? You remember how you used to tell me that every time I opened my mouth I put my foot into it, meaning of course that every time I spoke I got into trouble? You remember when Ralph Sinton left to take charge of the Western office and I was asked to present him with the loving cup the boys gave him, how flustered I was and how I couldn't say a word because there were people around? You remember how confused I used to be every time I met new people? I couldn't say what I wanted to say when I wanted to say it; and I determined that if there was any possible chance to learn how to talk I was going to do it.

"The first thing I did was to buy a number of books on public speaking, but they seemed to be meant for those who wanted to become orators, whereas what I wanted to learn was not only how to speak in public but how to speak to individuals under various conditions in business and social life.

"A few weeks later, just as I was about to give up hope of ever learning how to talk interestingly, I read an announcement stating that Dr. Frederick Houk Law of New York University had just completed a new course in business talking and public speaking entitled 'Mastery of Speech.' The course was offered on approval without money in advance, so since I had nothing whatever to lose by examining the lessons, I sent for them and in a few days they arrived. I glanced through the entire eight lessons, reading the headings and a few paragraphs here and there, and in about an hour the whole secret of effective speaking was opened to me.

"For example, I learned why I had always lacked confidence, why talking had always seemed something to be dreaded whereas it is really the simplest thing in the world to 'get up and talk.' I learned how to secure complete attention to what I was saying and how to make everything I said interesting, forceful and convincing. I learned the art of listening, the value of silence, and the power of brevity. Instead of being funny at the wrong time, I learned how and when to use humor with telling effect.

"But perhaps the most wonderful thing about the lessons were the actual examples of what things to say and when to say them to meet every condition. I found that there was a knack in making oral reports to my superiors. I found that there was a right way and a wrong way to present complaints, to give estimates, and to issue orders.

"I picked up some wonderful pointers about how to give my opinions, about how to answer complaints, about how to ask the bank for a loan, about how to ask for extensions. Another thing that struck me forcibly was that, instead of antagonizing people when I didn't agree with them, I learned how to bring them around to my way of thinking in the most pleasant sort of way. Then, of course, along with those lessons there were chapters on speaking before large audiences, how to find material for talking and speaking, how to talk to friends, how to talk to servants, and how to talk to children.

"Why, I got the secret the very first evening and it was only a short time before I was able to apply all of the principles and found that my words were beginning to have an almost magical effect upon everybody to whom I spoke. It seemed that I got things done instantly, where formerly, as you know, what I said went 'in one ear and out the other.' I began to acquire an executive ability that surprised me. I smoothed out difficulties like a true diplomat. In my talks with the chief I spoke clearly, simply, convincingly. Then came my first promotion since I entered the accounting department. I was given the job of answering complaints, and I made good. From that I was given the job of making collections. When Mr. Buckley joined the Officers Training Camp, I was made Treasurer. Between you and me, George, my salary is now $7500 a year and I expect it will be more from the first of the year.

"And I want to tell you sincerely, that I attribute my success solely to the fact that I learned how to talk to people."

******

When Jordan finished, I asked him for the address of the publishers of Dr. Law's Course and he gave it to me. I sent for it and found it to be exactly as he had stated. After studying the eight simple lessons I began to sell to people who had previously refused to listen to me at all. After four months of record breaking sales during the dullest season of the year, I received a wire from the chief asking me to return to the home office. We had quite a long talk in which I explained how I was able to break sale records—and I was appointed Sales Manager at almost twice my former salary. I know that there was nothing in me that had changed except that I had acquired the ability to talk where formerly I simply used "words without reason." I can never thank Jordan enough for telling me about Dr. Law's Course in Business Talking and Public Speaking. Jordan and I are both spending all our spare time making public speeches on war subjects and Jordan is being talked about now as Mayor of our little Town.

So confident is the Independent Corporation, publishers of "Mastery of Speech," Dr. Law's Course in Business Talking and Public Speaking, that once you have an opportunity to see in your own home how you can, in one hour, learn the secret of speaking and how you can apply the principles of effective speech under all conditions, that they are willing to send you the Course on free examination.

Don't send any money. Merely mail the coupon or write a letter and the complete Course will be sent, all charges prepaid, at once. If you are not entirely satisfied send it back any time within five days after you receive it and you will owe nothing.

On the other hand, if you are as pleased as are the thousands of other men and women who have used the Course, send only $5 in full payment. You take no risk and you have everything to gain, so mail the coupon now before this remarkable offer is withdrawn.

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If, after trying it, you wish to return it, we even refund the out-going transportation charges. So the trial does not cost you a cent. Nor does it place you under obligations to buy.

Our new plan has been a tremendous success. We are selling more Olivers this way than ever before. Over 700,000 Olivers have been sold! Oliver popularitiy is increasing daily.

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☐ Ship me a new Oliver Nine for five days free inspection. If I keep it, I will pay $57 at the rate of $3 per month. The title to remain in you until fully paid for.

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This does not place me under any obligation to buy. If I choose to return the Oliver, I will ship it back at your expense at the end of five days.

☐ Do not send a machine until I order it. Mail me your book—"The High Cost of Typewriters—The Reason and the Remedy," your de lux catalog and further information.

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"Young men should study business thoroly. As to opportunities, there are ten today where there was one, sixty years ago."
—JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER

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—CHAS. M. SCHWAB

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"Have successfully passed bar examination." G. L. B.

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The call for specialized brains in business is more insistent than ever. Salaries from thirty-five hundred to ten thousand dollars and even larger are ready now for proficient Business Managers, Expert Accountants, Auditors, Comptrollers, Banking Experts, Cost Accountants, Sales Managers, Traffic Managers, Interstate Commerce Experts and Correspondence Managers.

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Stay where you are while you are getting this knowledge which makes promotion certain. Only your spare time is required to secure precisely the training for which Business pays the large salaries. Get in months under the direction of the LaSalle experts, information you cannot obtain in years from your own experience. Every subject completely covered—made clear.

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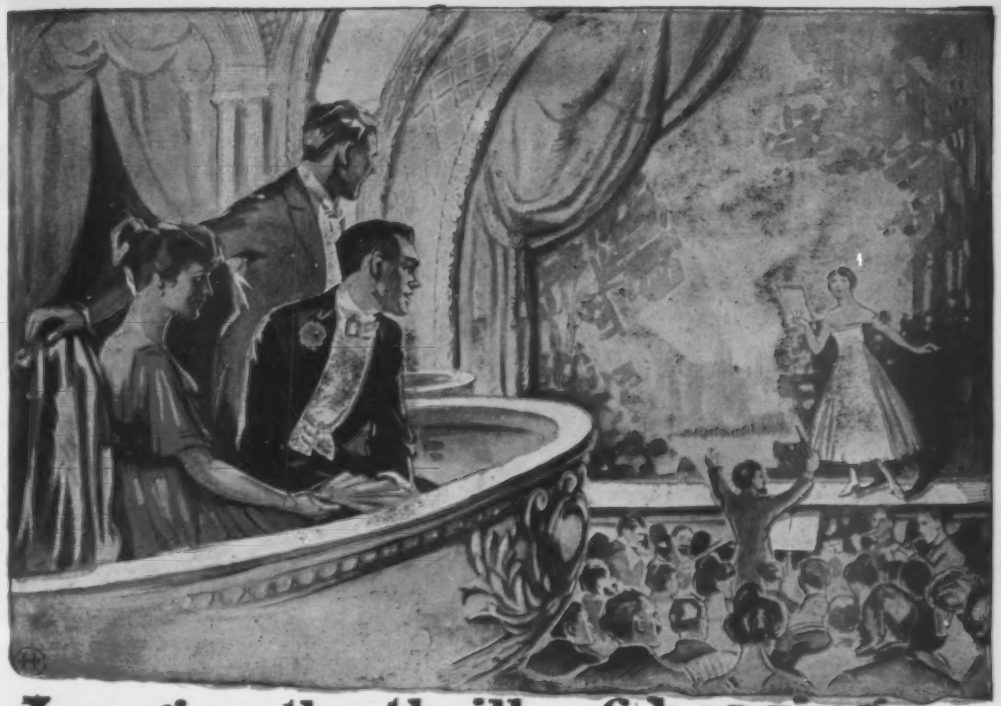

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—CHAS. M. SCHWAB

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"Since taking my course with LaSalle Extension University my earning capacity has increased 400 per cent." H. S. W.

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"Have been advanced five positions since taking LaSalle Course." H. C. L.

"Since taking the LaSalle Course I have increased my salary nearly 300 per cent." E. J. M.

"Have successfully passed bar examination." G. L. B.

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There is a Master Key

The Lowe Observatory
Edgar Lucien Larkin, Director
Los Angeles, Calif., Dec. 6, 1916.
Mr. C. F. Haanel, St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
Your booklet, "Master-Key," ought to be expanded into a book. Its teachings that Mind is the all-dominating creative force is precisely in line with the wonders of the most recent psychology. All persons having desks should have this pamphlet thereon. And it would be a fitting pocket companion.
EDGAR LUCIEN LARKIN,
Author of the Matchless Altar of the Soul

First Nautilus Center
160 Claremont Ave., New York
New York, Nov. 18, 1916.
I have made a thorough examination of the little booklet which you so appreciatively have called the "Master-Key," and can unhesitatingly endorse it and its teachings.
In this pamphlet of only a few pages you have led a hungry world to the threshold and placed in their hands a "key" with which the understanding ones may unlock the door and enter "The Secret Places of the Most High," and enjoy the abundance of all good to be found therein. With best wishes,
AGNES MAE GLASGOW, M. D.

THE MASTER MIND
Annie Rix Militz, Editor
Los Angeles, Calif.
The "Master-Key" is an excellent booklet of strong, scientific reaching of the allness of mind, not lacking in Spirituality, yet especially appealing to the intellect desiring logical proof of Truth.

Home Life Insurance Company of New York,
James Lee Bost, General Agent
Washington, D. C., Dec. 29, 1916.
Mr. CHAS. F. HAANEL,
St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
Your little booklet, entitled "The Master-Key," has been received and I had great pleasure in studying it carefully. It is very clear and concise, yet forceful presentation of the big subject handled, and shows a very wide study of the absolute teachings and deep understanding of the same. Very truly yours,
JAMES LEE BOST.

The Weltmer Institute of Suggestive Therapeutics
Nevada, Mo., Dec. 17, 1916.
CHAS. F. HAANEL, St. Louis, Mo.
Dear Sir:
"The Master-Key" gives a most scientific, direct and comprehensive presentation of the constructive power of thought.
Your most sincere friend,
SIDNEY A. WELTMER, Pres.

Which can unlock the Secret Chamber of Success, can throw wide the doors which seem to bar men from the Treasure House of Nature, and bids those enter and partake who are Wise enough to Understand and broad enough to Weigh the Evidence, firm enough to Follow Their Own Judgment and strong enough to Make the Sacrifice Exacted.

The International New Thought Alliance, General Headquarters
Washington, D. C., Nov. 14, 1916.
CHAS. F. HAANEL., St. Louis, Mo.
My Dear Mr. Haanel:
I have read your little booklet, "The Master-Key," carefully, and think it very good indeed. I am enclosing stamps for a few more copies, which I wish to give to those whom I know to need just the dynamic message which your book contains. Yours sincerely,
GRACE WILSON, Sec.

Unity School of Christianity
Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 14, 1916.
Dear Mr. Haanel:
Your little book, entitled "Master-Key," is a very practical presentation of the power of mind in its various fields of action. It conveys to one the conviction that Mind is All Powerful and All Present.
Faithfully,
CHARLES FILLMORE, Pres.

The Day Star Publishing Co.
Topeka, Kansas, Feb. 15, 1917.
"The Master-Key" is the answer to the demand "knock and it shall be opened," and truly it will open the "Gate Beautiful" leading into every "temple of the living God." All the world seek this marvelous key. Oh ye who sit in darkness "Knock"—use this "Master-Key" and the door shall be opened unto you, revealing to your eyes of flesh, peace, power and plenty.
LIDA HALLIE HARDY, Pres.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 21, 1916.
I have just received and read your booklet called "The Master-Key." It is exceedingly thoughtful and in many ways masterful. I thank you for the privilege of reading it and will file it away with my strong presentations of the philosophy of life. I am truly yours,
GRANVILLE LOWTHER.

FREE! There is no charge for the Master Key. It is FREE

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429 Granite Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.
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How to Discover the Biggest Ambition of Your Life and Achieve It Quickly

By Edward Earle Purinton

The Famous Efficiency Expert

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For twenty years I have been studying at close range, the exact reasons for these people's failure to get ahead. And into my new Practical Course in Personal Efficiency, I have put in compact form the results of this study of individuals and business concerns.

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How to Keep Well.
How to Improve Your Finances.
How to Organize Your Work.
How to Be Efficient at Home.
How to Plan Your Life.

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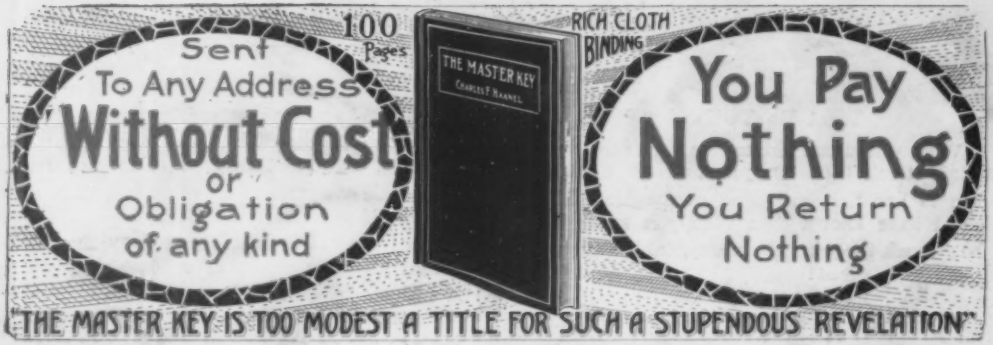

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